

THE  
Distrest Mother.  
A  
TRAGEDY.

As it is Acted at the  
THEATRE-ROYAL in *Drury-Lane*,

BY  
His MAJESTY'S SERVANTS.

---

By Mr. *PHILIPS*.

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THE FOURTH EDITION.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for J. TONSON, and Sold by W. TAYLOR,  
at the *Ship* in *Pater-noster-Row*. MDCCXVIII.

1568/1581.

Dispute Mochet

T R A G E D Y.

As it was acted at the Swan Theatre in London.

By the Swan Theatre's Servants.

By Mr. P. WILKES.



The Fourth Edition.

L O N D O N.

Printed by J. Tonson, and Sold by W. Taylor, at the Sign of the Swan, in Strand.



To Her GRACE the  
*Dutchess of Montague.*

M A D A M,



HIS Tragedy, which I  
do my self the Honour to  
dedicate to Your GRACE,  
is formed upon an Original,  
which passes for the  
most finished Piece in this kind of  
Writing, that has ever been produced  
in the *French* Language. The principal  
Action and main Distress of the  
Play is of such a Nature, as seems

## DEDICATION.

more immediately to claim the Patronage of a Lady: And, when I consider the great and shining Characters of Antiquity, that are celebrated in it, I am naturally directed to inscribe it to a Person, whose Illustrious Father has, by a long Series of glorious Actions, (for the Service of his Country and in Defence of the Liberties of *Europe*) not only surpassed the Generals of his own Time, but equalled the greatest Heroes of former Ages. The Name of *Hector* could not be more terrible to the *Greeks*, than that of the Duke of *Marlborough* has been to the *French*.

The refined Taste You are known to have in all Entertainments for the Diversion of the Publick, and the peculiar Life and Ornament Your Presence gives to all Assemblies, was no small Motive to determine me in the  
Choice



## DEDICATION.

Choice of my Patroness. The Charms, that shine out in the Person of Your GRACE, may convince every one, that there is nothing unnatural in the Power, which is ascribed to the Beauty of *Andromache*.

The strict Regard I have had to Decency and good Manners throughout this Work is the greatest Merit I pretend to plead in Favour of my Presumption; and is, I am sensible, the only Argument, that can recommend it most effectually to Your Protection:

I am with the greatest Respect,

MADAM,

Your GRACE's most Humble

and most Obedient Servant,

Ambr. Philips.

## The P R E F A C E.

**I**N all the Works of Genius and Invention, whether in Verse or Prose, there are in general but three Manners of Style; the one sublime and full of Majesty; the other simple, natural, and easie; and the third, swelling, forced, and unnatural. An injudicious Affectation of Sublimity is what has betrayed a great many Authors into the latter; not considering that real Greatness in Writing, as well as in Manners, consists in an unaffected Simplicity. The true Sublime does not lie in strained Metaphors and the Pomp of Words; but rises out of noble Sentiments and strong Images of Nature; which will always appear the more conspicuous, when the Language does not swell to hide and overshadow them.

These are the Considerations, that have induced me to write this Tragedy in a Style very different from what has been usually practised amongst us in Poems of this Nature. I have had the Advantage to Copy after a very great Master, whose Writings are deservedly admired in all Parts of *Europe*, and whose Excellencies are too well known to the Men of Letters in this Nation, to stand in need of any farther Discovery of them here. If I have been able to keep up to the Beauties of Monsieur *Racine* in my Attempt, and to do him no Prejudice in the Liberties I have taken frequently to vary from so great a Poet, I shall have no Reason to be dissatisfied with the Labour it has cost me to bring the completest of his Works upon the *English Stage*.

I shall trouble my Reader no farther, than to give him some short Hints relating to this Play from the Preface of the *French Author*. The following Lines of *Virgil* mark out the Scene, the Action, and the four principal Actors in this Tragedy, together with their distinct Characters; excepting that of *Hermione*, whose Rage and Jealousie is sufficiently painted out in the *Andromache* of *Euripides*.

*Littoraque Epiri legimus, portuque subimus  
Chaois, & celsam Buthroti ascendimus Urbem* —

*Sollemnos*

## The P R E F A C E.

Sollemnes tum fortè dapes, & tristia dona  
 Libabat cineri *Andromache*, Manesque vocabat  
*Hectoreum* ad tumulum, viridi quem cespite inanem,  
 Et geminas, causam lachrymis, sacraverat *Aras* —  
 Defecit vultum, & demissa voce locuta est:  
 O *Felix* una ante alias *Priameia* *Virgo*,  
 Hostilem ad tumulum, *Troja* sub moenibus altis  
 Fussa mori! qua sortitus non pertulit ullos,  
 Nec victoris heri tetigit captiva cubile.  
 Nos Patriâ incensâ, diversa per aquora velle,  
 Stirpis *Achillea* fastus; Juvenemque superbum  
 Servitio enixa tulimus; qui dei de secutus  
*Ledaam* *Hermiozem*, *Lacedaemonio*que hymenaeos —  
 Ast illum erepta magno inflammatus amore  
 Conjugis, & scelerum furis agitat *Orestes*  
 Excipit incantum patriasque obtruncat ad *Aras*.

Virg. *Æn.* lib. 3.

The great Concern of *Andromache*, in the Greek Poet, is for the Life of *Molossus*, a Son she had by *Pyrrius*. But it is more conformable to the general Notion we form of that Princess, at this great Distance of Time, to represent her as the Disconsolate Widow of *Hector*, and to suppose her the Mother only of *Astyanax*. Considered in this Light, no doubt, she moves our Compassion much more effectually, than she could be imagined to do in any Distress for a Son by a Second Husband.

In Order to bring about this beautiful Incident, so necessary to heighten in *Andromache* the Character of a tender Mother, an Affectionate Wife, and a Widow full of Veneration for the Memory of her deceased Husband; the Life of *Astyanax* is indeed a little prolonged beyond the Term fixed to it by the general Consent of the Ancient Authors. But so long as there is nothing improbable in the Supposition, a judicious Critick will always be pleased, when he finds a Matter of Fact (especially so far removed into the dark and fabulous Ages) falsified, for the Embellishment of a whole Poem.

# PROLOGUE,

Written by Mr. STEELE.

Spoken by Mr. WILKS.

**S**INCE Fancy of it self is loose and vain,  
The Wise by Rules that airy Power restrain;  
They think those Writers mad, who at their Ease  
Convey this House and Audience where they please;  
Who Nature's stated Distances confound,  
And make this Spot all Soils the Sun goes round:  
'Tis nothing, when a fancy'd Scene's in view,  
To skip from Covent-Garden to Peru.

But Shakespear's self transgress'd; and shall each Elf,  
Each Pigmy Genius, quote Great Shakespear's self?  
What Critick dares prescribe what's just and fit,  
Or mark out Limits for such boundless Wit!  
Shakespear could travel thro' Earth, Sea and Air,  
And paint out all the Powers and Wonders there.  
In barren Desarts He makes Nature smile,  
And gives us Feasts in his Enchanted Isle.

Our Author does his feeble Force confess,  
Nor dares pretend such Merit to transgress;  
Does not such shining Gifts of Genius share,  
And therefore makes Propriety his Care.  
Your Treat with study'd Decency he serves;  
Not only Rules of Time and Place preserves.

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## PROLOGUE.

*But strives to keep his Characters intire,  
With French Correctness and with British Fire.*

*This Piece presented in a Foreign Tongue,  
When France was Glorious, and her Monarch young,  
A hundred times a crowded Audience drew;  
A hundred times repeated, still 'twas new.*

*Pyrrhus provok'd, to no wild Rants betray'd,  
Resents his generous Love so ill repay'd;  
Does like a Man resent, a Prince upbraid.  
His Sentiments disclose a Royal Mind,  
Nor is he known a King from Guards behind.*

*Injur'd Hermione demands Relief;  
But not from heavy Narratives of Grief:  
In conscious Majesty her Pride is shewn;  
Born to avenge her Wrongs, but not bemoan.*

*Andromache——If in our Author's Lines,  
As in the great Original, she shines,  
Nothing but from Barbarity she fears.  
Attend with Silence; you'll applaud with Tears.*

---

**Dramatis**



# Dramatis Personæ.

## M E N.

- Pyrrhus*, The Son of *Achilles*, and King of  
*Epirus*, in Love with *Andromache*, but } *Mr. Booth.*  
 betrothed to *Hermione*.  
*Phoenix*, Counsellor to *Pyrrhus*. } *Mr. Bowman.*  
*Orestes*, the Son of *Agamemnon*, Ambassador  
 from the Greeks to *Pyrrhus*, in Love } *Mr. Powell.*  
 with *Hermione*.  
*Pylades*, Friend to *Orestes*, separated from  
 him in a Storm, driven on the Coasts of } *Mr. Mills.*  
*Epirus*, and detained by contrary Winds  
 in the Court of *Pyrrhus*.

## W O M E N.

- Andromache*, *Hector's* Widow, Captive to } *Mrs. Oldfield.*  
*Pyrrhus* and Mother to *Astyanax*.  
*Cepheia*, Confidante to *Andromache*. } *Mrs. Knight.*  
*Hermione*, Daughter to *Menelaus* and *Helen*,  
 betrothed to *Pyrrhus*. } *Mrs. Porter.*  
*Cleone*, Confidante to *Hermione*. } *Mrs. Cox.*

*Attendants to Pyrrhus and Orestes, &c.*

The SCENE a great Hall in the Court of *Pyrrhus* at *Buthrotos*, the Capital City of *Epirus*.

THE



# THE Distrest Mother.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

*Enter Orestes and Pylades.*

O R E S T E S.



*Pylades!* What's Life without a Friend! O  
At Sight of thee my gloomy Soul clears up;  
My Hopes revive, and Gladness dawns  
within me.  
After an Absence of six tedious Moons,  
How could I hope to find my *Pylades*,  
My Joy, my Comfort! on this fatal Shore?  
Even in the Court of *Pyrrhus*: in these Realms,  
These hated Realms, so cross to all my Wishes,  
Oh, my brave Friend! may no blind Stroke of Fate  
Divide us more, and tear me from my self.

*Pyl.* O Prince! O, my *Orestes*! O my Friend!——

Thus

## 2 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

Thus let me speak the Welcome of my Heart. [*Embracing.*  
 Since I have gain'd this unexpected Meeting,  
 Blest be the Powers, who barr'd my Way to Greece,  
 And kept me here! e'er since th' unhappy Day,  
 When warring Winds (*Epirus* full in view)  
 Sunder'd our Barks on the loud, stormy Main.

*Orest.* It was, indeed, a Morning full of Horror!

*Pyl.* A Thousand boading Cares have rack'd my Soul  
 In your behalf. Often, with Tears, I mourn'd  
 The fatal Ills, in which your Life's involv'd;  
 And grudg'd you Dangers, which I could not share.  
 I fear'd, to what Extreame the black Despair,  
 That prey'd upon your Mind, might have betray'd you;  
 And lest the Gods, in Pity to your Woes,  
 Should hear your Pray'rs, and take the Life you loath'd.  
 But now with Joy I see you! — The Retinue  
 And numerous Followers, that surround you here,  
 Speak better Fortunes, and a Mind dispos'd  
 To relish Life.

*Orest.* Alas! my Friend, who knows  
 The Destiny, to which I stand reserv'd!  
 I come in search of an inhuman Fair;  
 And live or dye, as she decrees my Fate.

*Pyl.* You much surprize me, Prince! — I thought  
 you cur'd  
 Of your unpity'd, unsuccessful Passion.  
 Why, in *Epirus*, shou'd you hope to find  
*Hermione* less cruel, than at *Sparta*?  
 I thought her Pride, and the disdainful manner,  
 In which she treated all your constant Sufferings,

Had

## *The* DISTREST MOTHER, 3

Had broke your Fetters, and assur'd your Freedom:  
Asham'd of your Repulse, and slighted Vows,  
You hated her; you talk'd of her no more.  
Prince, you deceiv'd me.

*Orest.* I deceiv'd my self.  
Do not upbraid th' Unhappy Man, that loves thee.  
Thou know'st, I never hid my Passion from thee:  
Thou saw'st it in its Birth, and in its Progress.  
And when at last the hoary King, her Father,  
Great *Menelaus*, gave away his Daughter,  
His lovely Daughter, to this happy *Pyrrhus*,  
Th' Avenger of his Wrongs; thou saw'st my Grief;  
My Torture, my Despair; and how I dragg'd,  
From Sea to Sea, a heavy Chain of Woes.  
O, *Pylades*! my Heart has bled within me,  
To see thee, prest with Sorrows not thy own,  
Still wandering with me, like a banish'd Man;  
Watchful, and anxious for thy wretched Friend,  
To temper the wild Transports of my Mind,  
And save me from my self.

*Pyl.* Why thus unkind?  
Why will you envy me the pleasing Tasks  
Of generous Love and sympathizing Friendship?

*Orest.* Thou Miracle of Truth! — But hear me on;  
When, in the midst of my disastrous Fate,  
I thought, how the Divine *Hermione*,  
Deaf to my Vows, regardless of my Plaints,  
Gave up herself, in all her Charms, to *Pyrrhus*;  
Thou may'st remember, I abhor'd her Name,  
Strove to forget her, and repay her Scorn.

## 4 The DISTREST MOTHER.

I made my Friends, and even my self, believe  
My Soul was freed. Alas! I did not see,  
That all the Malice of my Heart was Love,  
Triumphing thus, and yet a Captive still,  
In Greece I landed: And in Greece I found  
The assembled Princes all alarm'd with Fears,  
In which their common Safety seem'd concern'd,  
I join'd them: For I hoped that War and Glory  
Might fill my Mind, and take up all my Thoughts;  
And, that my shatter'd Soul, impair'd with Grief,  
Once more would reassume its wonted Vigour,  
And ev'ry idle Passion quit my Breast.

*Pyl.* The Thought was worthy *Agamemnon's* Son.

*Orest.* But see the strange Perverseness of my Stars,  
Which throws me on the Rock I strove to shun;  
The jealous Chiefs, and all the States of Greece,  
With one united Voice, complain of *Pyrrhus*;  
That now, forgetful of the Promise given,  
And mindless of his Godlike Father's Fate,  
*Astyanax* he nurses in his Court;  
*Astyanax*, the Young, surviving Hope  
Of ruin'd Troy; *Astyanax*, descended  
From a long Race of Kings; great *Hector's* Son.

*Pyl.* A Name still dreadful in the Ears of Greece!  
But, Prince, you'll cease to wonder, why the Child  
Lives thus protected in the Court of *Pyrrhus*,  
When you shall hear, the bright *Andromache*,  
His lovely Captive, charms him from his Purpose;  
The Mother's Beauty guards the helpless Son.

*Orest.* Your Tale confirms what I have heard; and hence

Spring



# The DISTREST MOTHER. 35

Spring all my Hopes. Since my proud Rival woes  
 Another Partner to his Throne and Bed,  
*Hermione* may still be mine. Her Father,  
 The injur'd *Menelaus*, thinks already  
 His Daughter slighted, and th' intended Nuptials  
 Too long delay'd. I heard his loud Complaints  
 With secret Pleasure; and was glad to find  
 Th' ungrateful Maid neglected in her Turn,  
 And all my Wrongs avenged in her Disgrace.

*Pyl.* Oh, may you keep your just Resentments warm!

*Orest.* Resentments? Oh my Friend, too soon I found  
 They grew not out of Hatred! I am betray'd:  
 I practise on my self; and fondly plot  
 My own Undoing. Goaded on by Love,  
 I canvass'd all the Suffrages of *Greece*;  
 And here I come their sworn Ambassador,  
 To speak their Jealousies, and claim this Boy.

*Pyl.* *Pyrrhus* will treat your Embassy with Scorn.  
 Full of *Achilles*, his redoubted Sire,  
*Pyrrhus* is proud, impetuous, headstrong, fierce;  
 Made up of Passions: Will he then be sway'd,  
 And give to Death the Son of her he loves?

*Orest.* Oh, would he render up *Hermione*,  
 And keep *Astyanax*; I should be blest!  
 He must; he shall: *Hermione* is my Life,  
 My Soul, my Rapture! — I'll no longer curb  
 The strong Desire, that hurries me to Madness:  
 I'll give a Loose to Love; I'll bear her hence;  
 I'll tear her from his Arms, I'll — O, ye Gods!  
 Give me *Hermione*; or let me die! —

But

## 6 The DISTREST MOTHER.

But, tell me *Pyrrhus*, how stand my Hopes?  
Is *Pyrrhus* still enamour'd with her Charms?  
Or do'st thou think, he'll yield me up the Prize,  
The dear, dear Prize, which he has ravish'd from me?

*Pyl.* I dare not flatter your fond Hopes so far;  
The King, indeed, cold to the *Spartan* Princess,  
Turns all his Passion to *Andromache*,  
*Hector's* afflicted Widow. But in vain,  
With inter-woven Love and Rage, he sues  
The charming Captive, obstinately cruel.  
Oft he alarms her for her Child, confin'd  
Apart; and, when her Tears begin to flow,  
As soon he stops them, and recalls his Threats.

*Hermione* a thousand times has seen  
His ill-requited Vows return to her;  
And takes his Indignation all for Love.  
What can be gather'd from a Man so various?  
He may, in the Disorder of his Soul,  
Wed her, he hates; and punish her, he loves.

*Orest.* But, tell me, how the wrong'd *Hermione*  
Brooks her slow Nuptials, and dishonour'd Charms?

*Pyl.* *Hermione* would fain be thought to scorn  
Her wavering Lover, and disdain his Falseness;  
But, spight of all her Pride, and conscious Beauty,  
She mourns in Secret her neglected Charms;  
And oft has made me privy to her Tears:  
Still threatens to be gone; yet still she stays;  
And sometimes sighs, and wishes for *Orestes*.

*Orest.* Ah, were those Wishes from her Heart, my Friend,  
I'd fly in Transport. ————— [Flourish within.

*Pyl.*

## The DISTREST MOTHER. 7

*Pyl.* Hear! — The King approaches  
To give you Audience. Speak your Embassy  
Without Reserve: Urge the Demands of *Greece*,  
And in the Name of all her Kings require,  
That *Hector's* Son be given into your Hands.  
*Pyrrhus*, instead of granting what they ask,  
To speed his Love, and win the *Trojan* Dame,  
Will make it Merit to preserve her Son.  
But, see; he comes!

*Orest.* Mean while, my *Pylades*,  
Go, and dispose *Hermione* to see  
Her Lover, who is come thus far, to throw  
Himself in all his Sorrows at her Feet.



### SCENE II.

*Orestes, Pyrrhus and Phoenix.*

*Orest.* Before I speak the Message of the *Greeks*,  
Permit me, Sir, to glory in the Title  
Of their Ambassador; since I behold  
*Troy's* Vanquisher, and Great *Achilles'* Son.  
Nor does the Son rise short of such a Father:  
If *Hector* fell by him, *Troy* fell by you.  
But, what your Father never would have done,  
You do. You cherish the Remains of *Troy*;  
And, by an ill-timed Pity, keep alive  
The dying Embers of a Ten-years War.  
Have you so soon forgot the mighty *Hector*?

The

*Pyl.*

## 8 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

The *Greeks* remember his high-brandish'd Sword,  
That fill'd their States with Widows and with Orphans;  
For which they call for Vengeance on his Son.  
Who knows what he may one Day prove? Who knows  
But he may brave us in our Ports; and, fill'd  
With *Hector's* Fury, set our Fleets on blaze?  
You may, your self, live to repent your Mercy.  
Comply, then, with the *Grecians* just Demands:  
Sate their Vengeance, and preserve your self.

*Pyr.* The *Greeks* are for my Safety more concern'd  
Than I desire. I thought your Kings were met  
On more Important Councils. When I heard  
The Name of their Ambassador, I hop'd  
Some glorious Enterprize was taking Birth.  
Is *Agamemnon's* Son dispatch'd for this?  
And do the *Grecian* Chiefs, renown'd in War,  
A Race of Heroes, join in close Debate,  
To plot an Infant's Death?—What Right has *Greece*  
To ask his Life? Must I, must I alone,  
Of all her scepter'd Warriors, be deny'd  
To treat my Captive as I please? Know, Prince,  
When *Troy* lay smoking on the Ground, and each  
Proud Victor shared the Harvest of the War;  
*Andromache* and this her Son were mine;  
Were mine by Lot; And who shall wrest them from me?  
*Ulysses* bore away old *Priam's* Queen;  
*Cassandra* was your own great Father's Prize:  
Did I concern my self in what they won?  
Did I send Embassies to claim their Captives?

*Orest.* But, Sir, we fear, for you and for our selves,

*Troy*

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## *The DISTREST MOTHER.* 9

*Troy* may again revive, and a new *Hector*  
Rise in *Astyanax*. Then think betimes——

*Pyr.* Let dastard Souls be timorously wise:  
But tell them, *Pyrrhus* knows not how to form  
Far-fancy'd Ills, and Dangers out of sight.

*Orest.* Sir, call to mind the unrivall'd Strength of *Troy*;  
Her Walls, her Bulwarks, and her Gates of Brass;  
Her Kings, her Heroes, and embattel'd Armies!

*Pyr.* I call them all to Mind; and see them all  
Confus'd in Dust; all mixt in one wide Ruin;  
All but a Child, and he in Bondage held.

What Vengeance can we fear from such a *Troy*?

If they have sworn to extinguish *Hector's* Race,

Why was their Vow for twelve long Months deferr'd?

Why was he not in *Priam's* Bosom slain?

He should have fallen among the slaughter'd Heaps,

Whelm'd under *Troy*. His Death had then been just,

When Age and Infancy, alike in vain,

Pleaded their Weakness; when the heat of Conquest,

And Horrors of the Sight, rous'd all our Rage,

And blindly hurry'd us through Scenes of Death.

My Fury then was without Bounds: But now,

My Wrath appeas'd, must I be cruel still?

And, deaf to all the tender Calls of Pity,

Like a cool Murderer, bath my Hands in Blood?

An Infant's Blood? — No, Prince—Go, bid the *Greeks*

Mark out some other Victim; my Revenge

Has had its Fill. What has escaped from *Troy*

Shall not be saved to perish in *Epirus*.

*Orest.* I need not tell you, Sir, *Astyanax*

Was doom'd to Death in *Troy*; nor mention how

The



## 10 *The DISTRESS MOTHER.*

The crafty Mother saved her darling Son.  
The *Greeks* do now but urge their former Sentence:  
Nor is't the Boy, but *Hector* they pursue;  
The Father draws their Vengeance on the Son:  
The Father, who so oft in *Grecian* Blood  
Has drench'd his Sword: The Father, whom the *Greeks*  
May seek even here. — Prevent them, Sir, in time.

*Pyr.* No! Let them come; since I was born to wage  
Eternal Wars. Let them now turn their Arms  
On him, who conquer'd for them: Let them come,  
And in *Epirus* seek another *Troy*.

'Twas thus they recompens'd my God-like Sire;  
Thus was *Achilles* thank'd: But, Prince, remember,  
Their black Ingratitude then cost them dear.

*Orest.* Shall *Greece* then find a Rebel Son in *Pyrhus*?

*Pyr.* Have I then conquer'd to depend on *Greece*?

*Orest.* *Hermione* will sway your Soul to Peace,  
And mediate 'twixt her Father and your self:  
Her Beauty will enforce my Embassie.

*Pyr.* *Hermione* may have her Charms; and I  
May love her still, tho' not her Father's Slave.  
I may in time give Proofs, that I am a Lover;  
But never must forget, that I am a King.  
Mean while, Sir, you may see fair *Helen's* Daughter:  
I know how near in Blood you stand ally'd.  
That done, you have my Answer, Prince. The *Greeks*  
No doubt expect your quick Return.

SCENE

# The DISTREST MOTHER. II 1

## SCENE III.

*Pyrrhus and Phoenix.*

*Phœn.* Sir, do you send your Rival to the Princess?

*Pyr.* I am told, that he has lov'd her long.

*Phœn.* If so,

Have you not cause to fear the smother'd Flame

May kindle at her Sight, and blaze anew?

And she be wrought to listen to his Passion?

*Pyr.* Ah, let them, *Phoenix*, let them love their Fill!

Let them go hence; let them depart together;

Together let them sail for *Sparta*: All my Ports

Are open to them both. From what Constraint,

What irksome Thoughts should I be then reliev'd!

*Phœn.* But, Sir—

*Pyr.* I shall another time, good *Phoenix*,

Unbosom to thee all my Thoughts.—For, see,

*Andromache* appears.

## SCENE IV.

*Pyrrhus, Andromache and Cephisa.*

*Pyr.* May I, Madam,

Flatter my Hopes so far, as to believe

You come to seek me here?

*Andr.*

## 12 The DISTREST MOTHER.

*Andr.* This way, Sir, leads  
To those Apartments, where you guard my Son.  
Since you permit me, once a Day, to visit  
All I have left of *Hector*, and of *Troy*;  
I go to weep a few sad Moments with him.  
I have not yet, to Day, embraced my Child;  
I have not held him in my widow'd Arms.

*Pyr.* Ah, Madam! should the Threats of *Greece* prevail  
You'll have Occasion for your Tears, indeed!

*Andr.* Alas! what Threats? What can alarm the *Greeks*?  
There are no *Trojans* left!

*Pyr.* Their Hate to *Hector*  
Can never die: The Terror of his Name  
Still shakes their Souls; and makes them dread his Son.

*Andr.* A mighty Honour for victorious *Greece*  
To fear an Infant; a poor, friendless Child!  
Who smiles in Bondage; nor yet knows himself  
The Son of *Hector*, and the Slave of *Pyrhus*.

*Pyr.* Weak as he is, the *Greeks* demand his Life;  
And send no less than *Agamemnon's* Son,  
To fetch him hence.

*Andr.* And, Sir, do you comply  
With such Demands!—This Blow is aim'd at me:  
How should the Child avenge his slaughter'd Sire?  
But, cruel Men! they will not have him live  
To cheer my heavy Heart, and ease my Bonds.  
I promis'd to my self in him a Son,  
In him a Friend, a Husband, and a Father.  
But I must suffer Sorrow heap'd on Sorrow;  
And still the fatal Stroke must come from you.

*Pyr.*

## The DISTREST MOTHER. 13

*Pyr.* Dry up those Tears: I must not see you weep:  
And know, I have rejected their Demands.  
The *Greeks* already threaten me with War:  
But, should they arm, as once they did for *Helen*,  
And hide the *Adriatick* with their Fleets;  
Should they prepare a second ten-Years Siege,  
And lay my Towers and Palaces in Dust;  
I am determin'd to defend your Son;  
And rather die my self, than give him up.  
But, Madam, in the midst of all these Dangers,  
Will you refuse me a propitious Smile?  
Hated of *Greece*, and prest on every side,  
Let me not, Madam, while I fight your Cause,  
Let me not combat with your Cruelties;  
And count *Andromache* amongst my Foes.

*Andr.* Consider, Sir, how this will sound in *Greece*?  
How can so great a Soul betray such Weakness?  
Let not Men say, so generous a Design  
Was but the Transport of a Heart in Love.

*Pyr.* Your Charms will justify me to the World.

*Andr.* How can *Andromache*, a Captive Queen,  
O'er-whelm'd with Grief, a Burden to her self,  
Harbour a Thought of Love? Alas! what Charms  
Have these unhappy Eyes, by you condemn'd  
To weep for ever?—Talk of it no more,—  
To reverence the Misfortunes of a Foe;  
To succour the Distrest; to give the Son  
To an afflicted Mother; to repel  
Confederate Nations, leagu'd against his Life;  
Unbribed by Love, untterrify'd by Threats,



# 14 The DISTREST MOTHER.

To pity, to protect him: These are Cares,  
These are Exploits worthy *Achilles'* Son.

*Pyr.* Will your Resentments, then, endure for ever!  
Must *Pyrrhus* never be forgiven? — 'Tis true,  
My Sword has often reek'd in *Phrygian* Blood,  
And carry'd Havock through your Royal Kindred:  
But you, fair Princess, amply have avenged  
Old *Priam's* vanquish'd House: And all the Woes,  
I brought on them, fall short of what I suffer.  
We both have suffer'd in our Turns: And now  
Our common Foes should teach us to unite.

*Andr.* Where does the Captive not behold a Foe?

*Pyr.* Forget that Term of Hatred; and behold  
A Friend in *Pyrrhus*! Give me but to hope,  
I'll free your Son; I'll be a Father to him:  
Myself will teach him to avenge the *Trojans*.  
I'll go in Person to chastise the *Greeks*,  
Both for your Wrongs and mine. Inspired by you,  
What would I not atchieve? Again shall *Troy*  
Rise from its Ashes: This right Arm shall fix  
Her Seat of Empire; and your Son shall reign.

*Andr.* Such Deams of Greatness suit not my Condition:  
His hopes of Empire perish'd with his Father.  
No; thou imperial City, ancient *Troy*,  
Thou Pride of *Asia*, founded by the Gods;  
Never, oh never! must we hope to see  
Those Bulwarks rise, which *Hector* could not guard! —  
Sir, all I wish for, is some quiet Exile;  
Where far from *Greece* remov'd, and far from you,  
I may conceal my Son, and mourn my Husband.

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*The DISTREST MOTHER.* 15

Your Love creates me Envy. Oh, return!

Return to your betroth'd *Hermione*.

*Pyr.* Why do you mock me thus? you know, I cannot.

You know my Heart is yours: My Soul hangs on you:

You take up every Wish: My waking Thoughts,

And nightly Dreams are all employ'd on you.

'Tis true, *Hermione* was sent to share

My Throne and Bed; and would with Transport hear

The Vows, which you neglect.

*Andr.* She has no *Troy*.

No *Hector* to lament: She has not lost

A Husband by your Conquests: Such a Husband!

(Tormenting Thought!) whose Death alone has made

Your Sire immortal: *Pyrrius* and *Achilles*

Are both grown great by my Calamities.

*Pyr.* Madam, 'tis well! 'Tis very well! I find,

Your Will must be obey'd: Imperious Captive,

It shall. Henceforth I blot you from my Mind:

You teach me to forget your Charms; to hate you.

For, know, inhuman Beauty, I have loved

Too well to treat you with Indifference.

Think well upon it: My disorder'd Soul

Wavers between th' Extreams of Love and Rage.

I've been too tame! I will awake to Vengeance!

The Son shall answer for the Mother's Scorn.

The *Greeks* demand him: Nor will I endanger

My Realms, to pleasure an ungrateful Woman.

*Andr.* Then he must die! alas, my Son must die!

He has no Friend, no Succour left, beside

His Mother's Tears, and his own Innocence.

# 16 The DISTREST MOTHER.

*Py.* Go, Madam; visit this unhappy Son.  
The Sight of him may bend your stubborn Heart;  
And turn to Softness your unjust Disdain.  
I shall once more expect your Answer. Go;  
And think, while you embrace the Captive Boy,  
Think, that his Life depends on your Resolves.



## SCENE V.

*Andromache and Cephalis.*

*Andr.* I'll go; and, in the Anguish of my Heart,  
Weep o'er my Child — If he must dye, my Life  
Is wrapt in his; I shall not long survive.  
'Tis for his sake, that I have suffer'd Life;  
Groan'd in Captivity; and out-liv'd *Hector*.  
Yes, my *Astyanax*; we'll go together!  
Together to the Realms of Night we'll go!  
There to thy ravish'd Eyes thy Sire I'll show,  
And point him out among the Shades below.



ACT

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## ACT II. SCENE I.

Hermione and Cleone.

HERMIONE.



WELL, I'll be rul'd, *Cleone*: I will see him;  
I have told *Pylades*, that he may bring him;  
But trust me, were I left to my own  
Thoughts,  
I should forbid him yet.

*Cle.* And why forbid him?

Is he not, Madam, still the same *Orestes*?

*Orestes*, whose Return you oft have wish'd?

The Man, whose Sufferings you so oft lamented,

And oftén prais'd his Constancy and Love?

*Her.* That Love, that Constancy, so ill requited,

Upbraids me to my self: I blush, to think

How I have us'd him; and would shun his Presence.

What will be my Confusion, when he sees me

Neglected, and forsaken, like himself?

Will he not say, Is this the scornful Maid;

The proud *Hermione*, that tyranniz'd

In *Sparta's* Court? And triumph'd in her Charms?

Her Insolence at last is well repaid.

I cannot bear the Thought.

*Cle.* You wrong your self

## 18 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

With unbecoming Fears. He knows too well  
Your Beauty and your Worth. Your Lover comes not  
To offer Insults; but repeat his Vows,  
And breath his ardent Passion at your Feet.  
But, Madam, what's your Royal Father's Will?  
What Orders do your Letters bring from *Sparta*?

*Her.* His Orders are, if *Pyrrhus* still delay  
The Nuptials, and refuse to Sacrifice  
This *Trojan* Boy; I should with speed embark,  
And with their Embassy return to *Greece*.

*Cle.* What would you more? *Orestes* comes in time  
To save your Honour. *Pyrrhus* cools apace:  
Prevent his Falshood; and forsake him first.  
I know you hate him: You have told me so.

*Her.* Hate him? My injur'd Honour bids me hate him:  
The ungrateful Man! to whom I fondly gave  
My Virgin Heart; the Man I loved so dearly;  
The Man, I doated on! Oh, my *Cleone*!  
How is it possible I should not hate him?

*Cle.* Then give him over, Madam. Quit his Court;  
And with *Orestes* —

*Her.* No! I must have time  
To work up all my Rage! To meditate  
A Parting, full of Horrour! My Revenge  
Will be but too much quicken'd by the Traitor.

*Cle.* Do you then wait new Insults? New Affronts?  
To draw you from your Father! Then to leave you!  
In his own Court to leave you, — for a Captive!  
If *Pyrrhus* can provoke you, he has done it.

*Her.* Why dost thou heighten my Distress? I fear

To



## *The DISTREST MOTHER.* 19

To search out my own Thoughts, and sound my Heart.  
Be blind to what thou see'st: Believe me cured:  
Flatter my Weakness; tell me I have conquer'd:  
Think, that my injur'd Soul is set against him;  
And do thy best to make me think so too.

*Cle.* Why would you loiter here, then?

*Her.* Let us fly!

Let us be gone! I leave him to his Captive:  
Let him go kneel and supplicate his Slave.  
Let us be gone!—But, what if he repent?  
What, if the perjur'd Princee again submit,  
And sue for Pardon? What, if he renew  
His former Vows?—But, oh the faithless Man!  
He flights me! drives to Extreame!—However,  
I'll stay, *Cleone*, to perplex their Loves:  
I'll stay, till, by an open Breach of Contract,  
I make him hateful to the *Greeks*. Already  
Their Vengeance have I drawn upon the Son:  
Their second Embassy shall claim the Mother:  
I will redouble all my Grievs upon her!

*Cle.* Ah, Madam, whither does your Rage transport you?  
*Andromache*, alas, is Innocent!  
A Woman plung'd in Sorrow; dead to Love:  
And, when she thinks of *Pyrrhus*, 'tis with Horrour.

*Her.* Would I had done so too!—He had not, then:  
Betray'd my easie Faith.—But I, alas!  
Discover'd all the Fondness of my Soul;  
I made no Secret of my Passion to him:  
Nor thought it dangerous to be sincere.  
My Eyes, my Tongue, my Actions spoke my Heart.



20 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

*Cle.* Well might you speak, without Reserve, to one Engag'd to you by solemn Oaths and Treaties.

*Her.* His Ardour too was an Excuse to mine:  
With other Eyes he saw me then!—*Cleone*,  
Thou may'st remember, every thing conspired  
To favour him: My Father's Wrongs avenged;  
The *Greeks* triumphant; Fleets of *Trojan* Spoils;  
His mighty Sire's, his own Immortal Fame;  
His eager Love;—All, all conspired against me!  
—But I have done:—I'll think no more of *Pyrrhus*.  
*Orestes* wants not Merit: And he loves me.  
My Gratitude, my Honour, both plead for him:  
And if I've Power o'er my own Heart, 'tis his.

*Cle.* Madam, he comes —

*Her.* Alas! I did not think  
He was so near!—I wish I might not see him!



SCENE II.

*Hermione, Cleone, and Orestes.*

*Her.* How am I to interpret, Sir, this Visit?  
Is it a Compliment of Form, or Love?

*Orest.* Madam, you know my Weakness. 'Tis my Fate  
To Love, unpity'd: To desire to see you;  
And still to swear each time shall be the last.  
My Passion breaks through my repeated Oaths;  
And every time I visit you, I am perjur'd.  
Even now, I find my Wounds all bleed afresh:

*The* DISTREST MOTHER. 21

I blush to own it; but I know no Cure.  
I call the Gods to Witness, I have try'd  
Whatever Man could do, (but try'd in vain)  
To wear you from my Mind. Through stormy Seas,  
And savage Climes, in a whole Year of Absence,  
I courted Dangers, and I long'd for Death.

*Her.* Why will you, Prince, indulge this mournful Tale?  
It ill becomes the Ambassadour of *Greece*  
To talk of Dying, and of Love. Remember  
The Kings you represent: Shall their Revenge  
Be disappointed by your ill-timed Passion?  
Discharge your Embassy: 'Tis not *Orestes*  
The *Greeks* desire should dye.

*Orest.* My Embassy  
Is at an End: For *Pyrrhus* has refused  
To give up *Hector's* Son. Some hidden Power  
Protects the Boy.

*Her.* Faithless, ungrateful Man! [*Aside.*]

*Orest.* I now prepare for *Greece*. But, ere I go,  
Would hear my final Doom pronounc'd by you.  
What do I say? — I do already hear it!  
My Doom is fixt: I read it in your Eyes.

*Her.* Will you then still despair? Be still suspicious?  
What have I done? Wherein have I been cruel?  
'Tis true, you find me in the Court of *Pyrrhus*:  
But, 'twas my Royal Father sent me hither.  
And who can tell, but I have shared your Grievs?  
Have I ne'er wept in secret? Never wish'd  
To see *Orestes*? —

*Orest.* Wish'd to see *Orestes*! —

## 22 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

Oh Joy, Oh Ecstasie! My Soul's intranced!  
Oh charming Princess! Oh transcendent Maid!  
My utmost Wish!—Thus, thus let me express  
My boundless Thanks!—I never was unhappy.—  
Am I *Orestes*?—

*Her.* You are *Orestes*:  
The same unalter'd, generous, faithful Lover;  
The Prince, whom I Esteem; whom I lament;  
And whom I fain would teach my Heart to love!

*Orest.* Ay, there it is!—I have but your Esteem;  
While *Pyrrhus* has your Heart!—

*Her.* Believe me, Prince,  
Where you as *Pyrrhus*, I should hate you!

*Orest.* No!—  
I should be blest! I should be lov'd as he is!—  
Yet all this while I dye by your Disdain;  
While he neglects your Charms, and courts another.

*Her.* And who has told you, Prince, that I am neglected?  
Has *Pyrrhus* said — (Oh, I shall grow distracted!)  
Has *Pyrrhus* told you so?—Or is it you,  
Who think thus meanly of me?—Sir, perhaps,  
All do not judge like you.—

*Orest.* Madam, go on!  
Insult me still: I am us'd to bear your Scorn.

*Her.* Why am I told how *Pyrrhus* loves or hates?  
—Go, Prince; and arm the *Greeks* against the Rebel:  
Let them lay waste his Country; raze his Towns;  
Destroy his Fleets; his Palaces;—Himself!—  
Go, Prince; and tell me then how much I love him.

*Orest.* To hasten his Destruction, come your self;

And

*The* DISTREST MOTHER. 23

And work your Royal Father to his Ruin.

*Her.* Mean while he weds *Andromache*!

*Orest.* Ah, Princess!

What is't I hear?

*Her.* What Infamy for Greece,

If he shou'd wed a *Phrygian*, and a Captive!

*Orest.* Is this your Hatred, Madam?—'Tis in vain

You hide your Passion; every Thing betrays it:

Your Looks, your Speech, your Anger, nay your Silence;

Your Love appears in All; your secret Flame

Breaks out the more, the more you would conceal it.

*Her.* Your Jealousie perverts my Meaning still,

And wrests each Circumstance to your Disquiet:

My very Hate is construed into Fondness.

*Orest.* Impute my Fears, if groundless, to my Love.

*Her.* Then hear me, Prince. Obedience to a Father

First brought me hither; and the same Obedience

Detains me here, 'till *Pyrrhus* drive me hence;

Or my offended Father shall recall me.

Tell this proud King, that *Menelaüs* scorns

To match his Daughter with a Foe of Greece;

Bid him resign *Astyanax*, or me.

If he persist to guard the hostile Boy,

*Hermione* embarks with you for *Sparta*.



SCENE



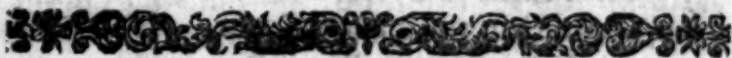
24 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.



SCENE III.

*Orestes, alone.*

Then is *Orestes* blest! My Griefs are fled!  
Fled like a Dream! — Methinks I tread in Air!  
*Pyrrhus*, enamour'd of his Captive Queen,  
Will thank me, if I take her Rival hence:  
He looks not on the Princess with my Eyes!  
Surprizing Happiness! — unlook'd-for Joy!  
Never let Love despair! — The Prize is mine!  
Be smooth, ye Seas; and, ye propitious Winds  
Breathe from *Epirus* to the *Spartan* Coasts!  
I long to view the Sails unfurl'd — But, see!  
*Pyrrhus* approaches in a happy Hour.



SCENE IV.

*Orestes, Pyrrhus and Phoenix.*

*Pyr.* I was in Pain to find you, Prince. My warm,  
Ungovern'd Temper would not let me weigh  
The Importance of your Embassy; and hear  
You argue for my Good. — I was to blame.  
I since have poised your Reasons: And I thank  
My good Allies: Their Care deserves my Thanks.

You



## *The* DISTRESS MOTHER. 25

You have convinced me, that the Weal of *Greece*,  
My Father's Honour, and my own Repose  
Demand, that *Hector's* Race should be destroy'd.  
I shall deliver up *Asyanax*;  
And you, your self, shall bear the Victim hence.

*Orest.* If you approve it, Sir, and are content  
To spill the Blood of a defenceless Child;  
The offended *Greeks*, no doubt, will be appeas'd.

*Pyr.* Closer to strain the Knot of our Alliance,  
I have determin'd to espouse *Hermione*.  
You come in time to grace our Nuptial Rites:  
In you the Kings of *Greece* will all be present;  
And you have Right to personate her Father,  
As his Ambassadour and Brother's Son.  
Go, Prince, renew your Visit; tell *Hermione*,  
To-Morrow I receive her from your Hands.

*Orest.* [*aside.*] O Change of Fortune! Oh undone *Orestes*!



### SCENE V.

*Pyrrhus and Phoenix.*

*Pyr.* Well, *Phoenix*! Am I still a Slave to Love?  
What thinkest thou now? Am I my self again?

*Phœn.* 'Tis as it should be; this discovers *Pyrrhus*;  
Shews all the Hero: Now you are your self!  
The Son! the Rival of the great *Achilles*!  
*Greece* will applaud you; and the World confess,

*Pyrrhus*

## 26 The DISTREST MOTHER.

*Pyrhus* has conquer'd *Thoy* a second Time!

*Pyr.* Nay, *Phoenix*, now I but begin to triumph:  
I never was a Conqueror 'till now!

Believe me, a whole Host, a War of Foes

May sooner be subdued, than Love. O, *Phoenix*!

What Ruin have I shunn'd? The *Greeks*, enraged,

Hung o'er me, like a gathering Storm; and soon

Had burst in Thunder on my Head; while I

Abandon'd Duty, Empire, Honour, all,

To please a thankless Woman!—One kind Look

Had quite undone me!

*Phæn.* O, my Royal Master!

The Gods, in Favour to you, made her cruel.

*Pyr.* Thou sawest with how much Scorn she treated me!

When I permitted her to see her Son,

I hoped it might have work'd her to my Wishes.

I went to see the mournful Interview,

And found her bathed in Tears, and lost in Passion.

Wild with Distress, a Thousand Times she call'd

On *Heclor's* Name; And when I spoke in Comfort,

And promis'd my Protection to her Son;

She kiss'd the Boy; and call'd again on *Heclor*:

'Then strain'd him in her Arms; and cry'd, 'Tis he!

'Tis he himself! his Eyes, his every Feature!

His very Frown, and his stern Look already!

'Tis he! 'Tis my loved Lord, whom I embrace!—

Does she then think, that I preserve the Boy,

To sooth and keep alive her Flame for *Heclor*?

*Phæn.* No doubt, she does; and thinks you favour'd in it.

But

## The DISTREST MOTHER. 27

But let her go, for an ungrateful Woman!

*Pyr.* I know the Thoughts of her proud, stubborn Heart:  
Vain of her Charms, and insolent in Beauty,  
She mocks my Rage; and, when it threatens loudest,  
Expects, 'twill soon be humbled into Love.  
But we shall change our Parts: And she shall find,  
I can be deaf, like her; and steel my Heart!  
She is *Hector's* Widow; I *Achilles' Son*.  
*Pyrhus* is born to hate *Andromache*.

*Phoen.* My Royal Master, talk of her no more:  
I do not like this Anger. Your *Hermione*  
Should now engross your Thoughts. 'Tis time to see her:  
'Tis time, you should prepare the Nuptial Rites;  
And not rely upon a Rival's Care:  
It may be dangerous.

*Pyr.* But tell me, *Phoenix*;  
Dost thou not think, the proud *Andromache*  
Will be enraged, when I shall wed the Princess?

*Phoen.* Why does *Andromache* still haunt your Thoughts?  
What is't to you, be she enraged or pleas'd?  
Let her Name perish: Think of her no more!

*Pyr.* No, *Phoenix*!—I have been too gentle with her:  
I have check'd my Wrath, and stifled my Resentments:  
She knows not yet to what degree I hate her.  
Let us return:—I'll brave her to her Face:  
I'll give my Anger its free Course against her.  
Thou shalt see, *Phoenix*, how I'll break her Pride!

*Phoen.* Oh, go not, Sir!—There's Ruin in her Eyes!  
You do not know your Strength: You'll fall before her,

## 18 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

Adore her Beauty, and revive her Scorn.

*Pyr.* That were indeed a most unmanly Weakness!  
Thou dost not know me, *Phoenix*!

*Phoen.* Ah, my Prince!  
You still are struggling in the Toils of Love.

*Pyr.* Can'st thou then think, I love this Woman still?  
One who repays my Passion with Disdain!  
A Stranger, Captive, friendless, and forlorn;  
She and her darling Son within my Power;  
His Life a Forfeit to the *Greeks*: Yet I  
Preserve her Son; would take her to my Throne;  
Would fight her Battels, and avenge her Wrongs;  
And all this while she treats me as her Foe!

*Phoen.* You have it in your Power to be revenged.

*Pyr.* Yes;—and I'll shew my Power!—I'll give her Cause  
To hate me! her *Astyanax* shall die!—

What Tears will then be shed! How will she then  
In bitterness of Heart reproach my Name!

Then, to compleat her Woes, will I espouse  
*Hermione*:—I will stab her to the Heart!

*Phoen.* Alas, you threaten, like a Lover, still!

*Pyr.* *Phoenix*, excuse this Struggle of my Soul:  
'Tis the last Effort of expiring Love.

*Phoen.* Then hasten, Sir, to see the *Spartan* Princess:  
And turn the Bent of your Desires on her.

*Pyr.* Oh, 'tis a heavy Task to conquer Love!  
And wean the Soul from her accusom'd Fondness.  
But, come:—A long Farewel to *Hector's* Widow.  
'Tis with a secret Pleasure I look back,

And



## *The* DISTREST MOTHER. 29

And see the many Dangers I have pass'd.  
The Merchant thus, in dreadful Tempests tost,  
Thrown by the Waves on some unlook'd-for Coast;  
Oft turns, and sees, with a delighted Eye,  
'Midst Rocks and Shelves the broken Billows fly:  
And, while the outrageous Winds the Deep deform,  
Smiles on the Tumult, and enjoys the Storm.



ACT





ACT III. SCENE I.

*Pylades and Orestes.*

*P Y L A D E S.*

OR Heav'n's sake, Sir, compose your ruffled  
And moderate your Rage! [Mind,

*Orest.* No, *Pylades*!

This is no time for Counsel. — I am deaf.  
Talk not of Reason! I have been too patient.

Life is not worth my Care. My Soul grows desperate.

I'll bear her off; or perish in the Attempt.

I'll force her from his Arms: — By Heav'n, I will!

*Pyl.* Well; 'tis agreed, my Friend: — We'll force her hence,  
But still consider we are in *Epirus*:

The Court, the Guards, *Hermione* herself,

The very Air we breath, belongs to *Pyrrhus*.

Good Gods! what tempted you to seek her here?

*Orest.* Lost to myself, I knew not what I did!

My Purposes were wild. Perhaps I came

To menace *Pyrrhus*, and upbraid this Woman.

*Pyl.* This Violence of Temper may prove fatal.

*Orest.* I must be more than Man to bear these Shocks,  
These Outrages of Fate, with Temper!

He tells me, that he weds *Hermione*;

And

## The DISTREST MOTHER. 31

And will to-Morrow take her from my Hand! —  
My Hand shall sooner tear the Tyrant's Heart —

*Pyl.* Your Passion blinds you, Sir: — He's not to blame.  
Could you but look into the Soul of *Pyrrhus*,  
Perhaps you'd find it tortur'd, like your own.

*Orest.* No, *Pylades*? 'Tis all Design. — His Pride,  
To triumph over me, has chang'd his Love.  
The fair, the bright *Hermione*, before I came,  
In all her Bloom of Beauty, was neglected.  
Ah cruel Gods! I thought her all my own!  
She was consenting to return to *Sparta*:  
Her Heart, divided betwixt Rage and Love,  
Was on the Wing to take its Leave of *Pyrrhus*.  
She heard my Sighs; she pity'd my Complaints;  
She praised my Constancy: — The least Indifference  
From this proud King, had made *Orestes* happy!

*Pyl.* So your fond Heart believes! —

*Orest.* Did I not see  
Her Hate, her Rage, her Indignation rise  
Against the ungrateful Man?

*Pyl.* Believe me, Prince, —

'Twas then she loved him most! Had *Pyrrhus* left her,  
She would have formed some new Pretext to stay.  
Take my Advice: — Think not to force her hence.  
But fly your self from her destructive Charms.  
Her Soul is linked to *Pyrrhus*: Were she yours,  
She would reproach you still, and still regret  
Her disappointed Nuptials. —

*Orest.* Talk no more!  
I cannot bear the Thought! She must be mine!

### 32 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

Did *Pyrrhus* carry Thunder in his Hand,  
I'd stand the Bolt, and challenge all his Fury,  
Ere I resigned *Hermione*——By Force  
I'll snatch her hence, and bear her to my Ships!  
Have we forgot her Mother *Helen's* Rape?

*Pyl.* Will then *Orestes* turn a Ravisher!  
And blot his Embassy?

*Orest.* O, *Pylades*!  
My Grief weighs heavy on me:——'Twill distract me!  
O leave me to my self!——Let not thy Friendship  
Involve thee in my Woes. Too long already,  
Too long hast thou been punish'd for my Crimes.  
It is enough, my Friend!——It is enough!  
Let not thy generous Love betray thee farther.  
The Gods have set me as their Mark, to empty  
Their Quivers on me.——Leave me to my self.  
Mine be the Danger; mine the Enterprize.  
All I request of thee is, to return,  
And in my Place convey *Astyanax*  
(As *Pyrrhus* has consented) into Greece.  
Go, *Pylades*——

*Pyl.* Lead on, my Friend, lead on!  
Let us bear off *Hermione*! No Toil,  
No danger can deter a Friend!——Lead on!  
Draw up the *Greeks*: Summon your numerous Train,  
The Ships are ready; and the Wind fits fair:  
There Eastward lies the Sea; the rolling Waves  
Break on those Palace-stairs. I know each Pass,  
Each Avenue and Out-let of the Court.  
This very Night we'll carry her on Board.

*Orest.*

## *The* DISTREST MOTHER. 33

*Orest.* Thou art too good!----I trespass on thy Friendship:  
But, oh excuse a Wretch, whom no Man pities,  
Except thy self; one just about to lose  
The Treasure of his Soul: Whom all Mankind  
Conspire to hate, and one who hates himself.  
When will my Friendship be of use to thee?

*Pyl.* The Question is unkind.----But now remember  
To keep your Counsels close, and hide your Thoughts:  
Let not *Hermione* suspect-----No more----  
I see her coming, Sir-----

*Orest.* Away, my Friend;  
I am advised: my All depends upon it.



### SCENE II.

*Orestes, Hermione, and Cleone.*

*Orest.* Madam, your Orders are obey'd: I have seen  
*Pyrrhus*, my Rival; and have gained him for you.  
The King resolves to wed you.

*Her.* So I am told;  
And farther, I am inform'd, that you, *Orestes*,  
Are to dispose me for the intended Marriage.

*Orest.* And are you, Madam, willing to comply?

*Her.* Could I imagine *Pyrrhus* loved me still?  
After so long Delays, who would have thought  
His hidden Flames would shew themselves at last,  
And kindle in his Breast, when mine expired?  
I can suppose, with you, he fears the Greeks;

That



### 34 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

That it is Interest, and not Love, directs him;  
And, that my Eyes had greater Power o'er you.

*Orest.* No, Princess, no! It is too plain he loves you.  
Your Eyes do what they will; and cannot fail  
To gain a Conquest, where you wish they should.

*Her.* What can I do, alas!—my Faith is promised:  
Can I refuse, what is not mine to give?  
A Princess is not at her Choice to love;  
All we have left us is a blind Obedience:  
And yet, you see, how far I had complied,  
And made my Duty yield to your Intreaties.

*Orest.* Ah, cruel Maid! you knew—but I have done.  
All have a Right to please themselves in Love:  
I blame you not: 'Tis true I hop'd:—But you  
Are Mistress of your Heart: And I am content.  
'Tis Fortune is mine Enemy; not you.  
But, Madam, I shall spare you farther Pain  
On this uneasy Theme; and take my leave.

### SCENE III.

*Hermione and Cleone.*

*Her.* *Cleone*, couldst thou think he'd be so calm?

*Cle.* Madam, this silent Grief sits heavy on him.  
He is to be pity'd: His too eager Love  
Has made him busie to his own Destruction.  
His Threats have wrought this Change of Mind in *Pyrrhus*.

*Her.* Dost thou think *Pyrrhus* capable of Fear?

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## *The* DISTREST MOTHER. 35

Whom should the intrepid *Pyrrhus* fear? The *Greeks*?

Did he not lead their barrastd Troops to Conquest,

When they despair'd; when they retired from *Troy*,

And fought for Shelter in their burning Fleets?

Did he not then supply his Father's Place?

No! my *Cleone*; he is above Constraint:

He Acts unforced; and where he weds, he loves.

*Cle.* Oh, that *Orestes* had remain'd in *Greece*!

I fear to-Morrow will prove Fatal to him.

*Her.* Wilt thou discourse of nothing, but *Orestes*?

*Pyrrhus* is mine again!—Is mine for ever!

Oh my *Cleone*! I am wild with Joy!——

*Pyrrhus*, the Bold! the Brave! the Godlike *Pyrrhus*!

——Oh, I could tell thee numberless Exploits,

And tire thee with his Battels!——Oh, *Cleone*——

*Cle.* Madam, conceal your Joy,—I see *Andromache*:

She weeps, and comes to speak her Sorrows to you.

*Her.* I would indulge the Gladness of my Heart!

Let us retire: Her Grief is out of Season.



### SCENE IV.

*Andromache, Hermione, Cleone, and Cephisa.*

*And.* Ah, Madam! whither, whither do you fly?

Where can your Eyes behold a Sight more pleasing,

Than *Hector's* Widow suppliant, and in Tears?

I come not an alarmed, a jealous Foe,

To envy you the Heart your Charms have won:

The

### 36 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

The only Man I sought to please, is gone;  
Kill'd in my Sight, by an inhuman Hand.  
*Hector* first taught me Love; which my fond Heart  
Shall ever cherish, till we meet in Death.

But, Oh, I have a Son!——And you, one Day,  
Will be no Stranger to a Mother's Fondness:

But Heav'n forbid, that you should ever know  
A Mother's Sorrow for an only Son,

Her Joy, her Bliss, her last surviving Comfort!

When every Hour she trembles for his Life!

Your Power o'er *Pyrhus* may relieve my Fears.

Alas! what Danger is there in a Child,

Saved from the Wrack of a whole ruined Empire?

Let me go hide him, in some Defart Isle:

You may rely upon my tender Care,

To keep him far from Perils of Ambition:

All, he can learn of me, will be to weep!

*Her.* Madam, 'tis easie to conceive your Grief:

But, it would ill become me, to solicit

In Contradiction to my Father's Will:

'Tis he, who urges to destroy your Son.

Madam, if *Pyrhus* must be wrought to Pity,

No Woman does it better, than your self:

If you gain him, I shall comply of Course.

SCENE

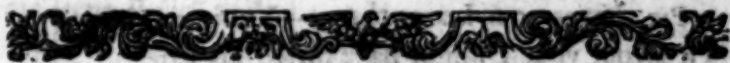


SCENE V.

Andromache, and Cephisa.

*And.* Didst thou not mind, with what Disdain she spoke !  
Youth and Prosperity have made her vain:  
She has not seen the fickle Turns of Life.

*Ceph.* Madam, were I as you, I'd take her Counsel;  
I'd speak my own Distress: One Look from you  
Will vanquish *Pyrrhus*, and confound the *Greeks*——  
See, where he comes!—Lay hold on this Occasion.



SCENE VI.

*Pyrrhus*, *Andromache*, *Phoenix* and *Cephisa*.

*Pyr.* Where is the Princess?—Did you not inform me  
*Hermione* was here? [To *Phoenix*.

*Phæn.* I thought so, Sir.

*And.* Thou seest, what mighty Power my Eyes have  
on him! [To *Cephisa*.

*Pyr.* What says she, *Phoenix*?

*And.* I have no Hope left!

*Phæn.* Let us be gone:—*Hermione* expects you.

*Ceph.* For Heaven's sake, Madam, break this fullen Silence.

*And.* My Child's already promised!——

*Ceph.* But not given.

C

*And.*

E



# 38 The DISTREST MOTHER.

*And.* No! no!—my Tears are vain! His Doom is fixt!

*Pyr.* See, if she deigns to cast one Look upon us!  
Proud Woman!

*And.* I provoke him by my Presence.  
Let us retire.

*Pyr.* Come let us satisfy  
The Greeks; and give them up this *Phrygian* Boy.

*And.* Ah, Sir, recall those Words!—What have you said!  
If you give up my Son, Oh give up me!—  
You, who so many Times have sworn me Friendship;  
Oh Heav'ns!—will you not look with Pity on me?  
Is there no Hope? Is there no Room for Pardon?

*Pyr.* *Phoenix* will answer you:—My Word is past.

*And.* You, who would brave so many Dangers for me.

*Pyr.* I was your Lover then:—I now am free.  
To favour you, I might have spared his Life:  
But you would ne'er vouchsafe to ask it of me.  
Now 'tis too late.

*And.* Ah, Sir, you understood  
My Tears, my Wishes, which I durst not utter,  
Afraid of a Repulse. Oh, Sir, excuse  
The Pride of Royal Blood, that checks my Soul,  
And knows not how to be importunate.  
You know, alas! I was not born to kneel,  
To sue for Pity, and to own a Master.

*Pyr.* No! in your Heart you curse me! you disclaim  
My generous Flame, and scorn to be obliged!  
This very Son, this Darling of your Soul,  
Would be less dear, did I preserve him for you.  
Your Anger, your Aversion fall on me;

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## *The* DISTREST MOTHER. 39

You hate me more than the whole League of *Greeks*:

But, I shall leave you to your great *Resentments*.

Let us go, *Phoenix*, and appease the *Greeks*.

*And*. Then let me dye! And let me go to *Hector*!

*Ceph*. But, Madam——

*And*. What can I do more? The Tyrant  
Sees my *Distraction*, and insults my *Tears*! [*To Cephisa*.

——Behold how low you have reduced a *Queen*!

These *Eyes* have seen my *Country* laid in *Ashes*;

My *Kindred* fall in *War*; my *Father* slain;

My *Husband* dragged in his own *Blood*; my *Son*

Condemned to *Bondage*; and my self a *Slave*.

Yet, in the midst of these unheard-of *Woes*,

'Twas some *Relief* to find my self your *Captive*;

And that my *Son*, derived from ancient *Kings*,

Since he must serve, had *Pyrrhus* for his *Master*.

When *Priam* kneeled, the great *Achilles* wept:

I hoped I should not find his *Son* less noble:

I thought the *Brave* were still the most *compassionate*.

Oh, do not, *Sir*, divide me from my *Child*! ——

If he must dye——

*Pyr*. *Phoenix*, withdraw a while.



### SCENE VII.

*Pyrrhus and Andromache*.

*Pyr*. Rise, Madam.——Yet you may preserve your *Son*.  
I find, whenever I provoke your *Tears*,

40 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

I furnish you with Arms against my self.  
 I thought my Hatred fixt, before I saw you.  
 Oh, turn your Eyes upon me, while I speak!  
 And see, if you discover in my Looks  
 An angry Judge, or an obdurate Foe.  
 Why will you force me to desert your Cause?  
 In your Son's Name I beg we may be Friends:  
 Let me intreat you to secure his Life!  
 Must I turn Suppliant for him? Think, Oh think,  
 ('Tis the last time) you both may yet be happy!  
 I know the Ties I break; the Foes I arm:  
 I wrong *Hermione*; I send her hence;  
 And with her Diadem I bind your Brows.  
 Consider well; for, 'tis of Moment to you!  
 Chuse to be wretched, Madam, or a Queen.  
 My Soul, consum'd with a whole Year's Despair,  
 Can bear no longer these perplexing Doubts.  
 Enough of Sighs, and Tears, and Threats I have try'd,  
 I know, if I am deprived of you, I die:  
 But oh, I die, if I wait longer for you!  
 I leave you to your Thoughts. When I return,  
 We'll to the Temple: There you'll find your Son;  
 And there be crown'd, or give him up for ever.



SCENE VIII.

*Andromache and Cephisa.*

*Ceph.* I told you, Madam, that, in spight of *Greece*,  
 You would o'er-rule the Malice of your Fortune.

*And.*

## *The* DISTREST MOTHER. 41

*Andr.* Alas! *Cephisia*, what have I obtain'd!  
Only a poor, short Respite for my Son.

*Ceph.* You have enough approved your Faith to *Hector*:  
To be reluctant still would be a Crime.  
He would himself persuade you to comply.

*Andr.* How!-- wouldst thou give me *Pyrrhus* for a Husband?

*Ceph.* Think you 'twill please the Ghost of your dead Hus-  
That you should sacrifice his Son? Consider, [band,  
*Pyrrhus* once more invites you to a Throne;  
Turns all his Power against the Foes of *Troy*;  
Remembers not *Achilles* was his Father;  
Retracts his Conquests, and forgets his Hatred.

*Andr.* But how can I forget it! How can I  
Forget my *Hector*, treated with Dishonour;  
Deprived of Funeral Rites; and vilely dragged,  
A bloody Coarse, about the Walls of *Troy*?  
Can I forget the good old King his Father,  
Slain in my Presence; at the Altar slain!  
Which vainly, for Protection, he embraced.  
Hast thou forgot that dreadful Night, *Cephisia*,  
When a whole People fell! Methinks I see  
*Pyrrhus*, enraged and breathing Vengeance, enter  
Amidst the Glare of burning Palaces:  
I see him hew his Passage through my Brothers;  
And, bathed in Blood, lay all my Kindred waste.  
Think, in this Scene of Horrour, what I suffer'd!  
This is the Courtship I received from *Pyrrhus*;  
And this the Husband thou would'st give me! No,  
We both will perish first! I'll ne'er consent.

*Ceph.* Since you resolve *Astyanax* shall die,

C 3

Hasto



## 42 The DISTREST MOTHER.

Haste to the Temple; bid your Son farewell.

Why do you tremble, Madam?

*Andr.* Oh *Cephisa*!

Thou hast awakened all the Mother in me.

How can I bid Farewel to the dear Child,

The Pledge, the Image of my much-loved Lord!

Alas, I call to mind the fatal Day,

When his too forward Courage led him forth

To seek *Achilles*.

*Ceph.* Oh, the unhappy Hour!

'Twas then *Troy* fell, and all her Gods forsook her.

*Andr.* That Morn, *Cephisa*! that ill-fated Morn!

My Husband bid thee bring *Astyanax*;

He took him in his Arms; and, as I wept,

My Wife, my dear *Andromache*, said he,

(Heaving with stifled Sighs to see me weep)

What Fortune may attend my Arms, the Gods

Alone can tell. To thee I give the Boy;

Preserve him as the Token of our Loves:

If I should fall, let him not miss his Sire

While thou survest; but by thy tender Care

Let the Son see, that thou didst love his Father.

*Ceph.* And will you throw away a Life so precious?

At once extirpate all the *Trojan* Line?

*Andr.* Inhuman King! What has he done to suffer?

If I neglect your Vows, is He to blame?

Has he reproach'd you with his slaughter'd Kindred?

Can he resent those Ills he does not know?—

But oh! While I deliberate he dies.

No, no, thou must not die, while I can save thee:

Oh!

*The* DISTREST MOTHER. 43

Oh! let me find out *Pyrrhus* — Oh *Cephisa*!

Do thou go find him.

*Ceph.* What must I say to him?

*Andr.* Tell him I love my Son to such Excess —  
But dost thou think he means the Child shall dye?  
Can Love rejected turn to so much Rage?

*Ceph.* Madam, he'll soon be here — Resolve on something.

*Andr.* Well then, assure him —

*Ceph.* Madam, of your Love?

*Andr.* Alas, thou know'st, that is not in my Power.  
Oh my dead Lord! Oh *Priam's* Royal House!

Oh my *Astyanax*! at what a Price

Thy Mother buys thee! — Let us go.

*Ceph.* But whither?

And what does your unsettled Heart resolve?

*Andr.* Come my *Cephisa*, let us go together,  
To the sad Monument, which I have rais'd  
To *Hector's* Shade; where in their sacred Urn  
The Ashes of my Hero lye enclosed,  
The dear Remains, which I have saved from *Troy*;  
There let me weep, there summon to my Aid,  
With pious Rites, my *Hector's* awful Shade;  
Let him be Witness to my Doubts, my Fears,  
My agonizing Heart, my flowing Tears:  
Oh! may he rise in Pity from his Tomb,  
And fix his wretched Son's uncertain Doom.

C 4

ACT



## ACT IV. SCENE I.

Andromache, Cephisa.

CEPHISA.

**B**EST be the Tomb of *Hector*, that inspires  
These pious Thoughts: Or is it *Hector's* self,  
That prompts you to preserve your Son!  
'Tis he,  
Who still presides o'er ruin'd *Troy*; 'tis he,  
Who urges *Pyrrhus* to restore *Astyanax*.

*Andr.* *Pyrrhus* has said he will: And thou hast heard him  
Just now renew the oft-repeated Promise.

*Ceph.* Already, in the Transports of his Heart,  
He gives you up his Kingdom, his Allies,  
And thinks himself o'erpaid for all in you.

*Andr.* I think I may rely upon his Promise:  
And yet my Heart is overcharged with Grief.

*Ceph.* Why should you grieve? You see he bids Defiance  
To all the *Greeks*; And, to protect your Son  
Against their Rage, has placed his Guards about him;  
Leaving himself defenceless for his sake:  
But Madam, think the Coronation Pumps  
Will soon demand your Presence in the Temple:  
'Tis Time you lay aside these Mourning Weeds.

*Andr.* I will be there; but first would see my Son.

*Ceph.*

## *The* DISTREST MOTHER. 45

*Ceph.* Madam, you need not now be anxious for him:  
He will be always with you, all your own,  
To lavish the whole Mother's Fondness on him.  
What a delight to train beneath your Eye  
A Son, who grows no longer up in Bondage;  
A Son, in whom a Race of Kings revives?  
But Madam, you are sad, and wrapt in Thought,  
As if you relish'd not your Happiness.

*Andr.* Oh I must see my Son once more, *Cephisa*!

*Ceph.* Madam, he now will be no more a Captive;  
Your Visits may be frequent as you please.

To morrow you may pass the live-long Day——

*Andr.* To morrow! Oh *Cephisa*!——But, no more!  
*Cephisa*, I have always found thee faithful:

A Load of Care weighs down my drooping Heart:

*Ceph.* Oh! that 'twere possible for me to ease you.

*Andr.* I soon shall exercise thy long-try'd Faith.——

Mean while I do conjure thee, my *Cephisa*,

Thou take no Notice of my present Trouble:

And, when I shall disclose my secret Purpose,

That thou be punctual to perform my Will.

*Ceph.* Madam, I have no Will but yours. My Life  
Is nothing, ballanced with my Love to you.

*Andr.* I thank thee, good *Cephisa*: my *Astyanax*

Will recompence thy Friendship to his Mother.

But, come: my Heart's at Ease: Assist me now

To change this sable Habit.——Yonder comes

*Hermione*: I would not meet her Rage.

C 5

SCENE





## SCENE II.

Hermione, Cleone.

*Cle.* This unexpected Silence, this Reserve,  
This outward Calm, this settled Frame of Mind,  
After such Wrongs and Insults, much surprize me!  
You, who before could not command your Rage,  
When *Pyrrhus* look'd but kindly on his Captive;  
How can you bear unmoved, that he should wed her,  
And seat her on a Throne which you should fill?  
I fear this dreadful Stillness in your Soul!  
'Twere better, Madam —

*Herm.* Have you call'd *Orestes*?

*Cle.* Madam, I have. His Love is too impatient,  
Not to obey with Speed the welcome Summons.  
His love-sick Heart o'erlooks his unkind Usage:  
His Ardour's still the same——Madam, he's here.



## SCENE III.

Orestes, Hermione, Cleone.

*Orest.* Ah Madam, is it true? does then *Orestes*  
At length attend you by your own Commands?  
What can I do——

*Herm.* *Orestes*, do you love me?

*Orest.* What means that Question, Princess? do I love you?  
My Oaths, my Perjuries, my Hopes, my Fears,

My

*The* DISTREST MOTHER. 47

My Farewel, my Return, all speak my Love.

*Herm.* Avenge my Wrongs, and I believe them all.

*Orest.* It shall be done—my Soul has catch'd the Alarm!  
We'll spirit up the *Greeks*—I'll lead them on:  
Your Cause shall animate our Fleets and Armies.  
Let us return: let us not lose a Moment,  
But urge the Fate of this devoted Land:  
Let us depart.

*Herm.* No Prince, let us stay here!  
I will have Vengeance here—I will not carry  
This load of Infamy to *Greece*; nor trust  
The Chance of War to vindicate my Wrongs.  
Ere I depart I'll make *Epirus* mourn.  
If you avenge me, let it be this Instant;  
My Rage brooks no Delay—haste to the Temple,  
Haste Prince, and sacrifice him.

*Orest.* Whom?

*Herm.* Why *Pyrrhus*.

*Orest.* *Pyrrhus*? did you say *Pyrrhus*?

*Herm.* You demurr?

Oh fly, be gone: give me not Time to think!

Talk not of Laws—he tramples on all Laws—  
Let me not hear him justify'd,—away.

*Orest.* You cannot think I'll justify my Rival.  
Madam, your Love has made him criminal.  
You shall have Vengeance; I'll have Vengeance too:  
But let our Hatred be profess'd and open;  
Let us alarm all *Greece*, denounce a War;  
Let us attack him in his Strength, and hunt him down—  
By Conquest: should I turn a base Assassin;

"I would."

# 48 The DISTRESS MOTHER.

'Twould fully all the Kings I represent.

*Herm.* Have not I been dishonour'd? set at nought?  
Expos'd to publick Scorn? — And will you suffer  
The Tyrant, who dares use me thus, to live?  
Know Prince, I hate him more than once I loved him.  
The Gods alone can tell how once I loved him;  
Yes, the false perjur'd Man, I once did love him;  
And spight of all his Crimes and broken Vows,  
If he should live, I may relapse—who knows  
But I to-Morrow may forgive his Wrongs?

*Orest.* First let me tear him piecemeal—he shall dye.  
But Madam, give me leisure to contrive  
The Place, the Time, the Manner of his Death:  
Yet I'm a Stranger in the Court of *Pyrrhus*;  
Scarce have I set my Foot within *Epirus*,  
When you enjoin me to destroy the Prince.  
It shall be done this very Night.

*Herm.* But now,  
This very Hour he weds *Andromache*;  
The Temple shines with Pomp; the Golden Throne  
Is now prepared; the joyful Rites begin;  
My Shame is publick — oh be Speedy, Prince!  
My Wrath's Impatient — *Pyrrhus* lives too long!  
Intent on Love and heedless of his Person,  
He covers with his Guards the *Trojan* Boy.  
Now is the Time; assemble all your *Greeks*:  
Mine shall assist them; let their Fury loose:  
Already they regard him as a Foe.  
Be gone, *Orestes*—kill the faithless Tyrant!  
My Love shall recompence the glorious Deed.

*Orest.*

## *The DISTREST MOTHER.* 49

*Orest.* Consider, Madam——

*Her.* You but mock my Rage!

I was contriving how to make you happy.

Think you to merit by your idle Sighs;

And not attest your Love by one brave Action?

Go, with your boasted Constancy! and leave

*Hermione* to execute her own Revenge!

I blush to think how my too easie Faith

Has twice been baffled in one shameful Hour!

*Orest.* Hear me but speak!—— you know I'll dye to  
serve you!

*Her.* I'll go my self: I'll stab him at the Altar:

Then drive the Poignard, reeking with his Blood,

Through my own Heart. In Death we shall unite:

Better to dye with him, than live with you!

*Orest.* That were to make him blest; and me more  
wretched:

Madam, he dyes by me:—— Have you a Foe,

And shall I let him live? My Rival too?

Ere yon Meridian Sun declines, he dyes:

And you shall say, that I deserve your Love.

*Herm.* Go Prince; strike home! and leave the rest to me.  
Let all your Ships stand ready for our Flight.

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### S C E N E IV.

*Hermione, Cleone.*

*Cle.* Madam, you'll perish in this bold Attempt.

*Her.* Give me my Vengeance, I am content to perish.



## 50 *The DISTREST MOTHER:*

I was to blame to trust it with another:  
 In my own Hands it had been more secure.  
*Orestes* hates not *Pyrrhus*, as I hate him:  
 I should have thrust the Dagger home; have seen  
 The Tyrant curse me with his parting Breath,  
 And roll about his dying Eyes, in vain,  
 To find *Andromache*, whom I would hide.  
 Oh, would *Orestes*, when he gives the Blow,  
 Tell him he dies my Victim!—Haste *Cleone*;  
 Charge him to say, *Hermione's* Resentments,  
 Not those of *Greece*, have sentenc'd him to Death.  
 Haste my *Cleone*! My Revenge is lost,  
 If *Pyrrhus* knows not that he dies by me!

*Cle.* I shall obey your Orders;—But I see  
 The King approach!—Who could expect him here!  
*Herm.* Oh fly! *Cleone*, fly! and bid *Orestes*  
 Not to proceed a Step before I see him.



## SCENE V.

*Hermione, Pyrrhus.*

*Pyr.* Madam, I ought to shun an injur'd Princess:  
 Your distant Looks reproach me: and I come  
 Not to defend, but to avow my Guilt.  
*Pyrrhus* will ne'er approve his own Injustice;  
 Nor form Excuses, while his Heart condemns him.  
 I might perhaps alledge, our warlike Sires,  
 Unknown to us, engaged us to each other;  
 And join'd our Hearts by Contract, not by Love,

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## The DISTREST MOTHER. 31

But I detest such Cobweb Arts: I own  
My Father's Treaty, and allow its Force.  
I sent Ambassadors to call you hither;  
Receiv'd you as my Queen: and hoped my Oaths,  
So oft renew'd, might ripen into Love.  
The Gods can witness, Madam, how I fought  
Against *Andromache's* too fatal Charms!  
And still I wish I had the Power to leave  
This *Trojan* Beauty, and be just to you.  
Discharge your Anger on this perjur'd Man!  
For I abhor my Crime! and should be pleas'd  
To hear you speak your Wrongs aloud: No Terms,  
No Bitterness of Wrath, nor keen Reproach  
Will equal Half the Upbraidings of my Heart.

*Herm.* I find, Sir, you can be sincere: You scorn  
To act your Crimes with Fear, like other Men.  
A Hero should be bold; above all Laws;  
Be bravely false; and laugh at solemn Ties.  
To be perfidious shews a daring Mind:  
And you have nobly triumphed o'er a Maid!  
To court me; to reject me; to return;  
Then to forsake me for a *Phrygian* Slave:  
To lay proud *Troy* in Ashes; then to raise  
The Son of *Hector*, and renounce the *Greeks*:  
Are Actions worthy the great Soul of *Pyrrhus*.

*Pyr.* Madam, go on: give your Resentments Birth;  
And pour forth all your Indignation on me.

*Herm.* 'Twould please your Queen, should I upbraid  
your Falshood:  
Call you perfidious, Traitor, all the Names

That

## 52 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

That injured Virgins lavish on your Sex;  
I should o'erflow with Tears, and dye with Grief,  
And furnish out a Tale to sooth her Pride:  
But, Sir, I would not over-charge her Joys.  
If you would charm *Andromache*, recount  
Your bloody Battles, your Exploits, your Slaughters,  
Your great Atchievements in her Father's Palace.  
She needs must love the Man, who fought so bravely,  
And in her Sight slew Half her Royal Kindred.

*Pyr.* With Horrour I look back on my past Deeds!  
I punish'd *Helen's* Wrongs too far; I shed  
Too much of Blood: But, Madam, *Helen's* Daughter  
Should not object those Ills the Mother caused.  
However, I am pleas'd to find you hate me:  
I was too forward to accuse my self:  
The Man who ne'er was loved, can ne'er be false.  
Obedience to a Father brought you hither;  
And I stood bound by Promise to receive you:  
But our Desires were different Ways inclined;  
And you, I own, were not oblig'd to love me.

*Her.* Have I not loved you then! perfidious Man!  
For you I slighted all the *Grecian* Princes;  
Forsook my Father's House; conceal'd my Wrongs;  
When most provoked; would not return to *Sparta*:  
In hopes, that Time might fix your wavering Heart.  
I loved you when inconstant: and even now,  
Inhumane King, that you pronounce my Death,  
My Heart still doubts, if I should love, or hate you.  
But, Oh, since you resolve to wed another,  
Defer your cruel Purpose till to Morrow.)

That

## The DISTREST MOTHER. 53

That I may not be here to grace her Triumph:  
This is the last Request, I e'er shall make you.——  
See if the barbarous Prince vouchsafes an Answer!  
Go, then, to the loved *Phrygian*; hence! be gone!  
And bear to her those Vows, that once were mine:  
Go in Defiance to the avenging Gods!  
Be gone! The Priest expects you at the Altar——  
But Tyrant, have a Care I come not thither.



### SCENE VI.

*Pyrrhus, Phoenix.*

*Phoen.* Sir, did you mind her Threats? your Life's in Danger:

There is no trifling with a Woman's Rage.  
The *Greeks*, that swarm about the Court, all hate you;  
Will treat you as their Country's Enemy,  
And join in her Revenge: Besides, *Orestes*  
Still Loves her to Distraction: Sir, I beg——

*Pyr.* How! *Phoenix*:—should I fear a Woman's Threats?  
A nobler Passion takes up all my Thought:  
I must prepare to meet *Andromache*.  
Do thou place all my Guards about her Son:  
If he be safe, *Pyrrhus* is free from Fear.

SCENE



54 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*



SCENE VII.

*Phoenix, alone.*

Oh *Pyrrhus*! Oh, what Pity 'tis, the Gods,  
Who fill'd thy Soul with every kingly Virtue,  
Form'd thee for Empire and consummate Greatness,  
Should leave thee so expos'd to wild Desires,  
That hurry thee beyond the Bounds of Reason!  
Such was *Achilles*: Generous, fierce, and brave;  
Open, and undefining: But impatient,  
Undisciplin'd, and not to be controul'd.  
I fear this Whirl of Passion, this Career,  
That over-bears Reflection and cool Thought,  
I tremble for the Event!—But see, the Queen,  
Magnificent in royal Pride, appears.  
I must obey, and guard her Son from Danger.



SCENE VIII.

*Andromache, Cephisa.*

*Ceph.* Madam, once more you look and move a Queen!  
Your Sorrows are dispers'd, your Charms revive,  
And every faded Beauty blooms anew.

*Andr.* Yet all is not as I could wish, *Cephisa*.

*Ceph.* You see the King is watchful o'er your Son;

Decks

## The DISTREST MOTHER. 55

Decks him with princely Robes, with Guards furrounds  
*Astyanax* begins to reign already. [him:

*Andr.* *Pyrrhus* is nobly minded: and I fain  
Would live to thank him for *Astyanax*:

'Tis a vain Thought-----However since my Child  
Has such a Friend, I ought not to repine.

*Ceph.* These dark Unfoldings of your Soul perplex me:  
What meant those Floods of Tears, those warm Embraces,  
As if you bid your Son Adieu for ever?  
For Heav'n's Sake, Madam, let me know your Griefs!  
If you distrust my Faith ---

*Andr.* That were to wrong thee.  
Oh, my *Cephisa*! This gay, borrowed Air,  
This Blaze of Jewels, and this bridal Dress,  
Are but mock-Trappings to conceal my Woe:  
My Heart still mourns; I still am *Hector's* Widow.

*Ceph.* Will you then break the Promise given to *Pyrrhus*?  
Blow up his Rage afresh, and blast your Hopes?

*Andr.* I thought, *Cephisa*, thou had'st known thy Mistress!  
Could'st thou believe I would be false to *Hector*?  
Fall off from such a Husband! Break his Rest,  
And call him to this hated Light again,  
To see *Andromache* in *Pyrrhus's* Arms!  
Would *Hector*, were he living and I dead,  
Forget *Andromache*, and wed her Foe?

*Ceph.* I cannot guess what Drift your Thoughts pursue!  
But, oh, I fear there's something dreadful in it!  
Must then *Astyanax* be doomed to dye;  
And you to linger out a Life in Bondage?

*Andr.* Nor this, nor that, *Cephisa*, will I bear:

My

56 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

My Word is past to *Pyrrhus*, his to me;  
And I rely upon his promis'd Faith.  
Unequal as he is, I know him well:  
*Pyrrhus* is violent; but he is sincere,  
And will perform beyond what he has sworn.  
The *Greeks* will but incense him more; their Rage  
Will make him cherish *Hector's* Son.

*Ceph.* Ah, Madam!

Explain these Riddles to my boading Heart!

*Andr.* Thou may'st remember, for thou oft hast heard me  
Relate the dreadful Vision, which I saw,  
When first I landed Captive in *Epirus*.  
That very Night, as in a Dream I lay,  
A ghastly Figure, full of gaping Wounds,  
His Eyes a-glare, his Hair all stiff with Blood,  
Full in my Sight thrice shook his Head and groaned.  
I soon discern'd my slaughter'd *Hector's* Shade;  
But, oh, how changed! Ye Gods, how much unlike  
The living *Hector*! — Loud he bid me fly!  
Fly from *Achilles* Son! then sternly frown'd,  
And disappear'd: Struck with the dreadful Sound,  
I started and awaked.

*Ceph.* But did he bid you  
Destroy *Astyanax*?

*Andr.* *Cepheisa*, I'll preserve him;  
With my own Life, *Cepheisa*, I'll preserve him.

*Ceph.* What may these Words, so full of Horrour, mean?

*Andr.* Know then the secret Purpose of my Soul:  
*Andromache* will not be false to *Pyrrhus*;  
Nor violate her sacred Love to *Hector*.

This

*The* DISTRESS MOTHER. 57

This Hour I'll meet the King; the holy Priest  
Shall join us, and confirm our mutual Vows.

This will secure a Father to my Child.

That done, I have no farther Use for Life:

This pointed Dagger, this determin'd Hand,  
Shall save my Virtue, and conclude my Woes.

*Ceph.* Ah, Madam! Recollect your scatter'd Reason!  
This fell Despair ill suits your present Fortunes.

*Andr.* No other Stratagem can serve my Purpose:  
This is the sole Expedient, to be just  
To *Hector*, to *Astyanax*, to *Pyrrhus*.

I soon shall visit *Hector*, and the Shades

Of my great Ancestors——*Cephisa*, thou

Wilt lend a Hand to close thy Mistress' Eyes.

*Ceph.* Oh, never think, that I will stay behind you!

*Andr.* No, my *Cephisa*; I must have thee live.

Remember thou did'st promise to obey,

And to be secret: Wilt thou now betray me?

After thy long, thy faithful Service, wilt thou

Refuse my last Commands, my dying Wish?

Once more, I do conjure thee, live for me!

*Ceph.* Life is not worth my Care, when you are gone.

*Andr.* I must commit into thy faithful Hands,  
All that is dear and precious to my Soul:

Live, and supply my Absence to my Child.

All that remains of *Troy*; a future Progeny

Of Heroes; and a distant Line of Kings,

In him, is all intrusted to thy Care.

*Ceph.* But, Madam, what will be the Rage of *Pyrrhus*,  
Defrauded of his promis'd Happiness?

*Andr.*



## 58 *The* DISTREST MOTHER.

*Andr.* That will require thy utmost Skill: Observe  
The first impetuous Onsets of his Grief:  
Use every Artifice to keep him steadfast.  
Sometimes with Tears thou may'st discourse of me:  
Speak of our Marriage: Let him think I loved him:  
Tell him my Soul repos'd it self on him,  
When I resign'd my Son to his Protection.

*Ceph.* Oh, for a Spirit to support my Grief!  
Is there ought more, before you go for ever?

*Andr.* Oh, my *Cephisa*! my swollen Heart is full!  
I have a thousand Farewells to my Son: ———  
But Tears break in——Grief interrupts my Speech——  
My Soul o'erflows in Fondness!——Let him know  
I dy'd to save him:——And would dye again.  
Season his Mind with early Hints of Glory:  
Make him acquainted with his Ancestors;  
Trace out their shining Story in his Thoughts:  
Dwell on the Exploits of his immortal Father;  
And sometimes let him hear his Mother's Name.  
Let him reflect upon his Royal Birth  
With modest Pride: *Pyrrhus* will prove a Friend:  
But let him know, he has a Conqueror's Right.  
He must be taught to stifle his Resentments,  
And sacrifice his Vengeance to his Safety:  
Should he prove head-strong, rash, or unadvised,  
He then will frustrate all his Mother's Virtue;  
Provoke his Fate; and I shall dye in vain.

*Ceph.* Alas, I fear, I never shall out-live you!

*Andr.* No more:——Thy Tears, *Cephisa*, will betray me:  
Assume a chearful Look: But still remember——

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## The DISTREST MOTHER. 59

[Flourish within.]

Hark, how the Trumpet, with its sprightly Notes,  
Proclaims the appointed Hour, and calls us hence :  
*Hector*, I come, once more a Queen, to join thee!  
Thus the gay Victim, with fresh Garlands crown'd,  
Pleased with the sacred Fife's enlivening Sound,  
Through gazing Crouds, in solemn State, proceeds;  
And, drest in fatal Pomp, magnificently bleeds.



A C T

# ACT V. SCENE I.

*Hermione, alone.*



**W**HAT have I done? where am I? where  
is *Pyrrhus*?

Ye Gods! what mean these Horrors?—  
I am undone!

My Soul is on the Rack!—I cannot bear it!—

Why do I wander like some guilty Ghost?

What brought me to this Place? what keeps me here?

The Court of *Pyrrhus* has no room for me!——

Do I still doubt if I should love or hate him?

Hard-hearted Man! How unconcern'd he left me!

Did he once figh? bestow one pitying Look?

Once shed a Tear? or speak one soft kind Word?

Did he so much as feign one Moment's Sorrow,

To calm my Griefs, and mitigate his Falshood?

—Why am I still thus anxious for his Life?

Why do I start at his impending Fate?

Shall he then live; shall the base Traytor live

To laugh at my Distress? No, let him perish!

Be quick, *Orestes*!——Execute my Orders!

Alas! my Orders? Oh preposterous Guilt!

Can I decree the Death of him I love

Was it for this my Soul delighted in him?

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## The DISTREST MOTHER: 61

Was it for this I left my Father's Court?  
Have I then cross'd so many Realms and Seas,  
To murder *Pyrrhus*?——



### SCENE II.

*Hermione, Cleone.*

*Herm.* Oh, *Cleone* help me!

What have I done? Is *Pyrrhus* yet alive?

What say'st thou?—Answer me! where is the King?

*Cle.* Madam, I saw the cruel Prince set forward,  
Triumphant in his Looks, and full of Joy.  
Still, as he walk'd, his ravish'd Eyes were fixt  
On the fair Captive; while through shouting Grouds  
She pass'd along with a dejected Air,  
And seem'd to mourn her *Hector* to the last.

*Herm.* Insulting Tyrant! I shall burst with Rage!——  
But say, *Cleone*, didst thou mark him well?  
Was his Brow smooth? Say, did there not appear  
Some Shade of Grief? Some little Cloud of Sorrow?  
Did he not stop? Did he not once look back?  
Didst thou approach him? Was he not confounded?  
Did he not — Oh, be quick! And tell me all!

*Cle.* Madam, the Tumult of his Joy admits  
No Thought, but Love. Unguarded he march'd on  
'Midst a promiscuous Throng of Friends and Foes.  
His Cares all turn upon *Astyanax*,  
Whom he has lodg'd within the Cittadel,  
Defended by the Strength of all his Guards.

D

*Herm.*



62 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

*Her.* Enough!---he dyes!--the Traytor!--Where's *Orestes*?

*Cle.* He is in the Temple, with his whole Retinue.

*Herm.* Is he still resolute? Is he determin'd?

*Cle.* Madam, I fear-----

*Herm.* How!--Is *Orestes* false?

Does He betray me too?

*Cle.* A Thousand Doubts

Perplex his Soul, and wound him with Remorse:

His Virtue and his Love prevail by Turns.

He told me *Pyrrhus* should not fall ignobly;

*Pyrrhus* the warlike Son of great *Achilles*.

He dreads the Censure of the *Grecian* States;

Of all Mankind: And fears to stain his Honour.

*Herm.* Poor, timorous Wretch! 'tis false! he basely fears  
To cope with Dangers, and encounter Death:

'Tis That He fears?---Am I bright *Helen's* Daughter?

To vindicate her Wrongs all *Greece* conspired;

For Her confederate Nations fought, and Kings were slain;  
*Troy* was o'er-thrown, and a whole Empire fell.

My Eyes want Force to raise a Lover's Arm

Against a Tyrant, that has dared to wrong me!

*Cle.* Madam, like *Helen*, trust your Cause to *Greece*.

*Herm.* No; I'll avenge my self; I'll to the Temple;

I'll over-turn the Altar, stab the Priest:

I'll hurl Destruction, like a Whirlwind, round me!

They must not wed! they must not live! they shall not!

Let me be gone! I have no Time to lose!

Stand off! with-hold me not! I am all Distraction!

Oh *Pyrrhus*, Tyrant, Traitor! Thou shalt bleed.

SCENE



SCENE III.

Hermione, Cleone, Orestes.

*Orest.* Madam, 'tis done: Your Orders are obeyed;  
The Tyrant lyes expiring at the Altar.

*Herm.* Is *Pyrrhus* slain? ———

*Orest.* Even now he gasps in Death:  
Our *Greeks*, all undistinguish'd in the Croud,  
Flock'd to the Temple, and dispers'd themselves  
On every side the Altar: I was there:  
*Pyrrhus* observed me, with a haughty Eye;  
And, proud to triumph over *Greece* in me,  
From his own Brows he took the Diadem,  
And bound it on the Temples of his Captive:  
Receive, said he, my Crown; receive my Faith;  
Mine and my People's Sovereign reign for ever.  
From this blest Hour, a Father to your Son,  
I'll scourge his Foes: Hence forward be he stiled  
The *Trojan* King. I swear it at the Altar;  
And call the Gods to ratify my Vows.  
His Subjects with loud Acclamations shook  
The spacious Dome! Our *Greeks*, enraged, cry'd out  
Revenge! Revenge! broke through the thronging Press;  
And rush'd tumultuous on the unguarded King.  
Their eager Fury left no Work for me.  
*Pyrrhus* a while opposed their clashing Swords,  
And dealt his fatal Blows on every side,  
With manly Fierceness; till oppress'd by Numbers,

D 2

Streaming

## 64 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

Streaming with Blood, all over gashed with Wounds,  
He reel'd, he groan'd, and at the Altar fell.

Haste, Madam: let us fly! Haste to our Ships!  
They lye unmoor'd: Our Friends attend us there.

*Herm.* What have they done!

*Orest.* Madam, forgive their Rage.

I own your Vengeance had been more compleat,  
Had *Pyrrhus* fallen by me; and had he known,

*Hermione* chastis'd him by my Arm.

[Tale

*Herm.* Peace, Monster, Peace! — Go tell thy horrid  
To Savages, and howl it out in Desarts.

Would'st thou impute to me thy barbarous Guilt?

Me would'st thou make the Accomplish'd of thy Crimes?

Hence, to thy *Greeks*! And boast thy foul Exploits!

My Soul abhors them! I disclaim the Deed!

Be gone! I know thee not! Thou fell Barbarian!

What had he done? What could provoke thy Madness

To assassinate so great, so brave a Man!

Who set thee on?

*Orest.* O, grant me Patience, Heaven!

With your own Lips did you not curse the Tyrant,

Pronounce his Death, and urge me to destroy him?

*Herm.* What if, transported by my boundless Passion,

I could not bear to see him wed another?

Were you to obey a jealous Woman's Phrenzy?

You should have dived into my inmost Thoughts:

My Heart, though full of Rage, was free from Malice;

And all my Anger was Excess of Love.

Why did you take me at my Word? You saw

The Struggles of my Soul; you heard me rave.

You

## The DISTREST MOTHER. 65

You should have question'd me a Thousand Times;  
Yet still have doubted, and still question'd on,

Before you ventured on a Life so precious. [Will——

*Orest.* Hear me but speak:——Heav'n knows, against my

*Herm.* Why did you not return? Why not consult me  
A second Time? And, undetermin'd still,

Again return, and still find new Delays?

What had your rash, officious *Greeks*, dire Blood-Hounds,

To do with my *Revenge*? What drew you hither,

To bring on me the vengeful Woes, that haunt you?

Are these the Fruits of your detested Love?

Your fatal Embassy, your hateful Presence

Drove *Pyrrhus* to my Rival: and destroys

Both him and me.——He might have lov'd me still,

Had you ne'er interposed.——Avant! Begone!

And leave me in *Epirus*,——I renounce

My Friends, my Country, *Greece*, and all Mankind:

But chiefly I renounce Thee! Monster, Thee!



### SCENE IV.

*Orestes.*

Am I awake! Where am I! Soft, my Soul:

Be not too rash.——Was that *Hermione*?

Why should her Anger thunder against me?

Was not this Blood-shed all by her Command?——

I am indeed, a most outrageous Monster!

A Russian, Murderer, a base Assassin!

And all to please a false, ungrateful Woman.

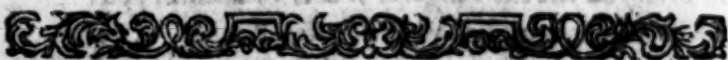
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Hence—



## 66. *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

Henceforward let the *Laws* of Nations cease;  
 And let the Pale, that severs Right and Wrong,  
 Things Sacred and Prophane, be broken down:  
 Gods in their Temples, Kings upon their Thrones,  
 Are not in Safety, while *Orestes* lives.  
 Oh, never more shall my torn Mind be healed,  
 Nor taste the gentle Comforts of Repose!  
 A dreadful Band of gloomy Cares surround me,  
 And lay strong Siege to my distracted Soul.



### SCENE V.

*Orestes, Pylades, attended by Greeks.*

*Pyl.* Haste, Prince; let us be gone: 'Tis Death to stay.  
*Andromache* reigns Queen: She gives the Alarm,  
 And vows Revenge upon the Foes of *Pyrrhus*.  
 The People arm and muster in the Streets:  
 Our *Greeks* will not be able long to guard  
 The Palace Gates, and to secure our Flight.  
 We must be speedy, Sir.

*Orest.* You may depart,  
 My Friends:—*Hermione* and I remain.—  
 Her Cruelty has quite undone me!—Go,  
 And leave me to my self—I'll find her out.

*Pyl.* Alas, unhappy Princess!—She is no more:  
 Forget her, Sir, and save your self with us.

*Orest.* *Hermione* no more!—O all ye Powers!

*Pyl.* Full of Disorder, Wildness in her Looks,  
 With Hands expanded, and dishevelled Hair,

Breath-

## The DISTREST MOTHER. 67

Breathless and pale, with Shrieks she sought the Temple:  
In the mid-way she met the Corpse of *Pyrrhus*:  
She startled at the Sight: Then, stiff with Horror,  
Gazed frightful! Wakened from the dire Amaze,  
She raised her Eyes to Heav'n with such a Look,  
As spoke her Sorrows, and reproach'd the Gods:  
Then plunged a Poignard deep within her Breast,  
And fell on *Pyrrhus*, grasping him in Death.

*Orest.* I thank you, Gods—I never could expect  
To be so Wretched!—You have been industrious  
To finish your Decrees, to make *Orestes*  
A dreadful Instance of your Power to punish.  
I am singled out to bear the Wrath of Heav'n.

*Pyl.* You hazard your Retreat by these Delays.  
The Guards will soon beset us. Your Complaints  
Are vain, and may be fatal.

*Orest.* True, my Friend:  
And therefore 'twas I thank'd the bounteous Gods.  
My Fate's accomplish'd!—I shall dye Content.  
Oh bear me hence!—Blow, Winds!—

*Pyl.* Let us be gone.

*Orest.* The murdered Lovers wait me—Hark! They call!  
Nay, if your Blood still reeks, I'll mingle mine.  
One Tomb will hold us all.

*Pyl.* Alas! I fear  
His Ravings will return with his Misfortunes. [ness!]

*Orest.* I am dizzy!—Clouds!—Quite lost in utter Dark-  
Guide me, some friendly Pilot, through the Storm.  
I shiver!—Oh, I freeze!—So:—Light returns:  
'Tis the grey Dawn. — See, *Pylades*! Behold!—

## 68 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

I am encompass'd with a Sea of Blood!——  
The crimson Billows!——Oh! My Brain's on Fire!

*Pyl.* How is it, Sir?——Repose your self on me.

*Orest.* *Pyrrhus*, stand off! What would'st thou?——

How he glares!

What envious Hand has clos'd thy Wounds?——Have at thee.

It is *Hermione* that strikes.——Confusion!

She catches *Pyrrhus* in her Arms.——Oh, save me!

How terrible she looks!——She knits her Brow!

She frowns me Dead: She frights me into Madness!

Where am I?——Who are you?

*Pyl.* Alas, poor Prince!

Help to support him.——How he pants for Breath!

*Orest.* This is most kind, my *Pylades*.——Oh, why,  
Why was I born to give thee endless Trouble?

*Pyl.* All will go well: He settles into Reason.

*Orest.* Who talks of Reason? Better to have none,  
Than not enough.——Run, some one, tell my *Greeks*,  
I will not have them touch the King.—Now!—Now!  
I blaze again!—See there!—Look where they come!  
A Shoal of Furies!——How they swarm about me!  
My Terror!—Hide me!——Oh their snaky Locks!  
Hark! How they hiss!——See! See their flaming Brands!  
Now they let drive full at me! How they grin,  
And shake their Iron Whips!——My Ears! What yelling!  
And see *Hermione*!—She sets them on!——

Thrust not your Scorpions thus into my Bosom!

Oh!—I am stung to Death!——Dispatch me soon!

There:—Take my Heart, *Hermione*!—Tear it out!

Disjoynt me!—kill me!—Oh, my tortured Soul!——

*Pyl.*

## The DISTRESS MOTHER. 69

*Pyl.* Kind Heaven restore him to his wonted Calm!  
Oft have I seen him rave: But never thus:  
Quite spent!--Assist me, Friends, to bear him off.  
Our Time is short: should his strong Rage return,  
'Twould be beyond our Power to force him hence.  
Away, my Friends!--I hear the Portal open.



### SCENE VI.

*Phoenix, attended by Guards.*

All, all are fled!--*Orestes* is not here!-----  
Triumphant Villains!--The base, giddy Rabble,  
Whose Hands should all have been employed with Fire  
To waste the Fleet, flocked round the dying Princess:  
And, while they stand agaze, the *Greeks* embark.  
Oh, 'tis too plain!--This Sacrilegious Murder  
Was authorised.--The Ambassador's Escape  
Declares his Guilt.--Most bloody Embassy!  
Most unexampled Deed! Where, where, ye Gods,  
Is Majesty secure, if in your Temples  
You give it no Protection!--See; the Queen.



### SCENE VII.

*Phoenix, Andromache, Cephisa, with Attendants.*

*Andr.* Yes, ye inhumane *Greeks*! The Time will come,  
When you shall dearly pay your bloody Deeds!  
How should the *Trojans* hope for Mercy from you,

When



40 *The DISTREST MOTHER.*

When thus you turn your impious Rage on *Pyrrhus*;  
*Pyrrhus*, the bravest Man in all your League;  
 The Man, whose single Valour made you triumph,  
 Is my Child there?—

*Ceph.* It is the Corpse of *Pyrrhus*.

The weeping Souldiers bear him on their Shields.

*Andr.* Ill-fated Prince! Too negligent of Life!

And too unwary of the faithless *Greeks*!

Cut off in the fresh, ripening Prime of Manhood,

Even in the Pride of Life; thy Triumphs new,

And all thy Glories in full Blossom round thee!

The very *Trojans* would bewail thy Fate.

*Ceph.* Alas, then will your Sorrows never end!

*Andr.* Oh, never! never—While I live, my Tears

Will never cease; for I was born to Grieve.

Give present Orders for the Funeral Poms: [To *Phoen*]

Let him be robed in all his Regal State;

Place round him every shining Mark of Honour;

And let the Pile, that consecrates his Ashes,

Rise like his Fame, and blaze above the Clouds.



SCENE VIII.

*Andromache, Cephisa, with Attendants.*

*Ceph.* That Sound proclaims the Arrival of the Prince:  
 The Guards conduct him from the Citadel.

*Andr.* With open Arms I'll meet him!—Oh, *Cephisa*!  
 A springing Joy, mixt with a soft Concern,  
 A Pleasure, which no Language can express,

An

## *The DISTRESS MOTHER.* 71

An Ecstasie, that Mothers only feel,  
Plays round my Heart, and brightens up my Sorrow,  
Like Gleams of Sun-shine in a lowering Skie.

Though plunged in Ills, and exercised in Care,  
Yet never let the noble Mind despair.  
When prest by Dangers, and beset with Foes,  
The Gods their timely Succour interpose;  
And, when our Virtue sinks, o'erwhelm'd with Grief,  
By unforeseen Expedients bring Relief.

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## EPILOGUE,

Written by *Mr. Budgell* of the *Inner-Temple*.

Spoken by *Mrs. OLDFIELD*.

I Hope you'll own, that with becoming Art  
I've play'd my Game, and topp'd the Widow's Part.  
My Spouse, poor Man! could not live out the Play,  
But dy'd commodiously on Wedding-Day:  
While I, his Relict, made at one bold Fling  
My self a Princess, and young Sty a King.

You Ladies, who protract a Lover's Pain,  
And hear your Servants sigh whole Years in vain;  
Which of you all would not on Marriage Venture,  
Might she so soon upon her Jointure enter?

'Twas a strange Scape! had Pyrrhus liv'd till now  
I had been finely hamper'd in my Vow.

## EPILOGUE.

To my own Hand, and fly the Charms  
Of Love and Life in a young Monarch's Arms!  
'Twere an hard Fate——ere I had undergone it  
I might have took one Night——to think upon it.

But why, you'll say, was all this Grief express  
For a first Husband, laid long since at Rest?  
Why so much Coldness to my kind Protector?

——Ah Ladies! had you known the good Man Hector!

Homer will tell you (or I'm mis-inform'd)

That, when curag'd the Grecian Camp he storm'd,

To break the ten-fold Barriers of the Camp

He threw a Stone of such prodigious Weight,

As no two Men could lift; not even of those,

Who in that Age of thund'ring Mortals rose:

——It would have sprain'd a Dozen modern Baux.

At length howe'er I laid my Weeds aside,

And sunk the Widow in the well-dress'd Bride.

In you it still remains to grace the Play,

And bless with Joy my Coronation Day:

Take then, ye Circles of the Brave and Fair,

The Fatherless and Widow to your Care.

## FINIS.

